

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Understandability vs. authenticity

A reception study of the Finnish dub of the
game *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time*

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract</p> <p>Tutkielmassa selvitetään vastaanottotutkimuksen avulla suomalaisten lasten mielipiteitä <i>Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time</i> -videopelin suomenkielisestä dubbauksesta. Samalla selvitetään lokalisoinnin kokonaistarvetta tutkimalla, kuinka hyvin lapset saavat selvää alkuperäisen englanninkielisen version juonesta ja hahmojen puheesta. Oletuksena on, etteivät lapset juuri ymmärrä pelin englantia sen vaativan sanaston vuoksi ja suhtautuminen suomenkieliseen lokalisointiin on kriittistä Suomessa vallitsevien asenteiden takia. Tutkielman teoriataustana käytetään pelilokalisointiprosessia sekä dubbauksen, laadun ja vastaanottotutkimuksen teorioita.</p> <p>Tutkimusaineistoksi pelistä valittiin englannin- ja suomenkieliset versiot kahdesta välianimaatiosta sekä noin viidestä minuutista varsinaista peliä. Englanninkielisissä videoissa oli englanninkieliset tekstitykset, ja suomenkielisten videoiden laatu oli hieman huonompi. Videoiden lisäksi tutkimusta varten laadittiin kaksiosainen suomenkielinen kyselylomake, jonka osiot oli jaettu videoiden mukaan alaosiin. Englanninkielistä osuutta koskevat monivalintakysymykset käsittelevät pääasiassa pelin tapahtumia, ja suomenkielisen osuuden lomakkeessa vastaajia pyydettiin arvioimaan lokalisoinnin eri ominaisuuksia, kuten ääninäyttelyä, huumoria sekä yleistä selkeyttä. Lopuksi vastaajilta kysyttiin mielipidettä kieliversioiden eroista ja mieluisampaa versiota.</p> <p>Vastaanottotutkimus pidettiin 21.10.2015 Kellokosken koulun 6B-luokan 19:lle oppilaalle. Koeyleisö katsoi ensin englanninkieliset videot yksi kerrallaan ja vastasi englanninkielisen osion monivalintakysymyksiin. Sen jälkeen oppilaat katsoivat videot uudelleen suomeksi ja arvioivat dubbauksen eri ominaisuuksia sekä vastasivat lopuksi kokoaviin kysymyksiin.</p> <p>Analyysissä havaitaan, että oppilaat ymmärsivät hyvin vähän pelin englanninkielisestä versiosta, sillä enemmistö oppilaista vastasi oikein vain neljään 14:stä kysymyksestä. Oppilailta siis katosi paljon pelikokemukselle ja tarinalle tärkeitä elementtejä, kuten vitsejä ja hahmojen motiiveja. Tulokset olivat kuitenkin parempia, jos puheen tukena oli visuaalista informaatiota. Lisäksi huomataan, että dubbauksen vastaanotto oli enimmäkseen positiivinen ja arvio siitä keskimäärin hyvä. Dubbausta ja pelin ohjeita pidettiin suhteellisen selkeinä sekä ääninäyttelyä ja huumoria vähintään keskitasoisina, eivätkä tekniset seikat, kuten huulisynkronia, häirinneet koeyleisöä. Huumori oli kuitenkin koeyleisön mielestä dubbauksen selkeästi heikoin kohta. Dubbaus ei siis ollut täydellinen, mutta tarpeeksi hyvä miellyttämään koeyleisön enemmistöä.</p> <p>Vastausten mukaan enemmistö pitikin suomenkielistä versiota parempana, koska he ymmärsivät pelistä enemmän ja pelaaminen suomeksi tuntui heistä luonnollisemmalta. Suurin osa oppilaista ei lisäksi nähnyt suurta eroa kieliversioiden välillä, vaikka joidenkin mielestä versiot tuntuivat erilaisilta kielieron vuoksi. Osa koeyleisöstä valitsikin englannin sen "aitouden" tai dubbauksessa ärsyttäneiden seikkojen vuoksi. Tuloksiin vaikutti myös suomenkielisten videoiden huono laatu, jonka pieni osa oppilaista tulkitsi lokalisoinnin ominaisuudeksi. Tutkielman perusteella voidaan siis sanoa, että lapsille tehtyjen pelien lokalisointi näyttäisi olevan tarpeen, jotta ainakin pienet ja kieltä taitamattomammat lapset voivat nauttia niiden tarinoista. Lisäksi <i>A Crack in Timen</i> suomenkielinen dubbaus miellytti suurinta osaa koeyleisöstä, joten lokalisointi oli ainakin sen osalta onnistunut.</p>			
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1 Introduction

Video games¹ are a wide and prolific entertainment industry that ranges from casual mobile games to high-budget productions that take years to develop. No longer thought to be the hobby of just children and social recluses, video games are such a popular and widespread form of entertainment that competitive gaming has already been accepted as a learning subject in some institutes (Hiilinen 2015). While video games have made their way into the mainstream among media, they have also done so in the academic world. Translation Studies in particular have found much to research in the field of *game localisation* – translating and adapting video games into other languages and cultures, so new regions can enjoy the games in their own languages.

Despite being a fairly new field of Translation Studies, games and their localisations have slowly gained a higher status as a research subject. In recent years, there have been more and more studies (for example Karhila 2009, Taarluoto 2011, and Pitkänen 2014) and works (such as O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013 and Bernal-Merino 2015) concerning video games and their localisations from the viewpoint of Translation Studies. However, in Finland many of those studies have concentrated on subtitled video games. This is most likely because many of the important localisations of high-budget games – like *Half-Life* and *Portal* – are aimed at adult players and therefore subtitled like most translated audiovisual media in Finland (Vertanen 2007: 149). Still, there are many games that have been dubbed in Finnish, for example the latest installations of the popular *Ratchet & Clank*, *Sly Cooper* and *Crash Bandicoot* series, but there has not been much research of their dubbing or the dubbing process.

Nevertheless, these dubbed video games should be studied, since dubbed products in Finland are usually targeted at children, who often are still in the process of learning

¹ In this study, the term *video games* refers to digital games played on any electronic platforms, such as computers, game consoles or mobile devices. The word *game* is used throughout the study as a synonym for these kinds of games, and refers exclusively to them.

the language properly and get influenced by the media around them (Tiihonen 2007: 182). Good quality dubs are therefore a part of the linguistic development of their target audience, and studying dubbed video games could provide reference to their current quality and give feedback to those dubbing games in the future.

However, the concept of good translation quality is often difficult to define (Abdallah 2005: 45). How can we say whether a game's localisation has been successful or not? One way of looking at the quality of translated games is the experience. After all, the main objectives of localised video games are to entertain the player and give the target audience the same experience as the game's source audience had (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 17). So, one way to measure a game's quality is to use a reception study to ask the consumers themselves what they think of the game. That way, the target audiences' opinions can give insight to the quality and the overall need for localised games.

The need for dubbed games should be studied in particular, as dubbing is a very expensive form of localisation (Heikkinen 2007: 236). In addition to that, playing games in foreign languages has been proven to have a connection to children's improved language skills (Uuskoski 2011: 57). This raises the question if games should be dubbed at all: if children prefer the original version, understand it almost as well as the dubbed one, and develop better language skills at the same time, is it necessary to localise games through the more costly dubbing? This is what I intend to investigate.

Therefore, in this paper I will study the children's opinions of the Finnish dub of the sci-fi/action adventure game *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time* (2009) through a reception study done to sixth-graders as a questionnaire. My aim is to attempt to find out what the children think of the voice acting, translated jokes, and the overall quality of the Finnish game dub, and whether or not they prefer it to the original English version. Additionally, in order to chart the necessity for the Finnish dub, I will also try to ascertain how well the children can understand the game's story – an essential element in the experience – from the original English version. Because the language in *A Crack in Time* is very genre-specific, my hypothesis is that the children will not understand very much of the English version. Moreover, due to the

slightly negative attitudes towards localisations in Finland (Karvonen 2015), I theorise that the children will still be somewhat critical of the Finnish version.

I will begin the study by introducing the theoretical background used in Chapter 2. First, I will define the term game localisation and explain the localisation process, after which I will discuss the process of dubbing. Then, I will move on to the notion of quality in Translation Studies and why it is so difficult to define. Finally, I will discuss reception studies, and their characteristics and difficulties.

After that, I will move on to Chapter 3, where I will describe the material and method of the study. In the beginning, I will elaborate on *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time*, the game used as the source material, and the game samples used in the reception study. After that, I will introduce the questionnaire created for the study, describe the test audience, and narrate the course of the study itself.

Then, I will finally report my actual findings from the reception study in the Analysis Chapter 4. It has been divided into three sections according to the reception study's questionnaire: the English section, the Finnish section and the Final section. In the final Conclusion chapter, I will briefly summarise the results of my study and suggest possible subjects for further research.

2 Theoretical background

In this chapter, I will introduce the theoretical background of my study. In order to assess the quality of a game localisation, one should know what localisation is and how it is done. Localising games is more than just translating them, and the process has its own difficulties that always affect the final product. By understanding the process, one can also better understand the translator's decisions done during the localisation, which is why the first subchapter is dedicated to game localisation, and its process and problems. The situation is similar with dubbing, which is the heart and soul of this study's source material. It is therefore equally important to know the different aspects to consider in dubbing and the limitations therein, so those will be discussed in the second subchapter.

A reception study also involves the concept of quality, as the aim is to determine the audience's opinion on whether the localisation is good or not. To measure this, we must know what quality is, and how it can be evaluated, so that will be discussed in the third subchapter. Furthermore, to understand the environment of this study, it is also important to know what reception studies themselves are, and what kind of issues should be considered when conducting one. That is why the last subchapter will be about reception studies, their special features, and their challenges.

2.1 Game localisation

When talking about *localisation*, the term itself is quite problematic, because it has slightly different definitions in the localisation industry and Translation Studies (Pitkänen 2014: 5; Taarluoto 2011: 17). The problem stems from the fact that the terms *localisation* and *translation* are used synonymously, yet the two words are understood differently by both sides. The main difference is that the localisation industry sees localisation simply as translating a group of strings – disconnected sentences and words – without any cultural elements or implications. Translation Studies, on the other hand, keeps in mind the cultural, social and political contexts, and the translation's reception in the target culture. (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013:

102.) Therefore, Translation Studies has its own emphasis when it comes to video game localisation (Pitkänen 2014: 5; Taarluoto 2011: 17).

However, in general, *localisation* means adapting a product, such as a video game, to the target language and culture so that cultural or linguistic elements from the source culture do not hinder the intended user (Karvonen 2015). With video games, this can be done, for example, by changing the reading direction of in-game texts on screen, or censoring elements not considered appropriate in the target culture, like visible blood. Therefore, game localisation involves much more than just translating the texts within the game, such as the technical dimensions needed to modify the games (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 104).

In fact, the medium to be translated brings its own complications to game localisation as well. The main difference between video games and other forms of entertainment is interactivity: without the player's direct actions, the game cannot progress (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 75-76). This is different from, for example, a movie, which will resolve itself even if no one is watching it. Therefore, the final product is also interactive, which separates game localisation from other more traditional forms of audiovisual translation, such as the aforementioned movies (Karvonen & Karvonen N.A.). Another difference between localisation and other translation types is the multiple stages, such as programming, which are usually done by people other than the translator (Taarluoto 2011: 17). To make the long process as efficient as possible, the localisation industry has its own standardised procedure for localising games.

2.1.1 Game localisation process

The localisation process of the largest game productions has many phases and actors (people or parties involved), but the amount of effort and resources needed depends on the game's *level of localisation*. The chosen level, on the other hand, depends on the size of the target market and the objective of the publisher. The usual level for large productions released in multiple regions is *full localisation*, where everything from manual texts to the voice acting is translated. Naturally, the large amount of

work makes this level the most expensive, but the complete translation helps target culture players get more immersed in the game. (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 141.) Our source material *A Crack in Time* is a good example of a fully localised game, as it is also dubbed.

Fully localised games have naturally the most *assets* to translate. Assets are the components that form the game: in-game texts, audio and cinematic files, game art, and printed materials, like instruction manuals (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 111). The assets are collected into a *localisation kit*, which sometimes also contains information about the game and its content, walkthroughs, and glossaries of game terminology to help with the translation task (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 119-120).

After the localisation kit is assembled, it is sent to the translators through two possible routes. If the game developer or publisher has a separate department for localisation, its localisation manager appoints the project a *localisation coordinator*, who is responsible for all the language versions, staying on schedule, solving problems, and answering questions about the translation project (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 128). In other words, they act as the liaison between the game developers and the translators (Karvonen 2015).

On the other hand, if the translation task is outsourced to a separate translation company, the coordinator liaisons between the developers and the vendor, who have their own *project manager*. In this model, it is the project managers' responsibility to supervise the translation process and deliver questions from the translators to the developer. (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 128.) Therefore, the translators are rarely in direct contact with the developers, and all the possible questions they might have about the translation assignment take some time to go through the chain and back. Naturally, this slows the translation process down.

The localisation coordinator or project manager then sends the localisation kit to the translators, who translate the text and art assets within. The text assets usually consist of separate strings of text in one large table file or document with the possible details, such as the speaker or the string's context, found only in the codes marking the strings for the developers. There are often several translators working on the

same assets independently, which can cause problems with consistency. (Karvonen 2015.) That is why all the assets are then carefully proofread and edited accordingly. Afterwards, the translated parts requiring dubbing are sent to the recording studio (either the developer's own or a vendor's), where the audio localisation is done. (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 134.) Dubbing will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.2.

After every asset has been translated and the audio parts have been recorded, the translated assets of all language versions are sent back to the project manager and finally the developers for the post-localisation phase. The various translated assets are then integrated into the game code, and new playable games are produced (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 136). The localised games are then tested for technical and linguistic errors by specific *linguistic testers*, who play the game and report possible grammatical errors and bugs in the localisation (Karvonen 2015). After the localised game had been thoroughly tested, edited, and finally deemed ready, it is sent into production.

2.1.2 Difficulties in game localisation

Due to the differences of the final products, video game localisation differs from localising more practical software: with software meant for everyday use, like business applications, the priorities are accessibility and functionality of the product (Taarluoto 2011: 20). In turn, the emphasis of game localisation is on the experience itself, and the feelings the player experiences while playing. In other words, the objective is to provide the customers the equivalent experience the original game gave to its audience (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 17). So even though functionality is still an important part of the localisation process, game localisation requires more creativity and originality than regular software localisation (Taarluoto 2011: 20).

Still, despite the need for creativity, game translators usually have to work with very strict conditions (Karvonen & Karvonen N.A.). Game translation is naturally affected by the game industry's problems, like piracy. As a countermeasure to pirates (and to maximise profits), publishers usually aim for *simship* – the simultaneous release of

the game and its localised versions in all regions (Bernal-Merino 2015: 167). Due to the ever-present fear of piracy, game translators rarely get to see the game while it is in development, and, as mentioned above, usually the translatable material consists of strings of text sent via email with little to no context (Karvonen 2015).

Moreover, simshipping makes the task of translating a game more difficult, since there is no stable source for reference during the game's incomplete development, so parts of the game can change, and the localisation is essentially blind. Also, the larger and more intricate the game world becomes, the harder it is for the translator to understand it without playing the game beforehand, and sometimes the translators have to take risks which can lead to mistakes. (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 61, 118-119.)

Additionally, the deadlines are often very strict, and the translators have to adapt to the publisher's directions. This includes using specific terms or leaving certain parts, like character names, completely untranslated, yet again for marketing reasons. The translatable material can also include code, such as variables², which cannot be changed or conjugated, and the translation has to be built around them, which can sometimes be challenging. (Karvonen 2015.)

Furthermore, game designers very rarely take linguistic differences, such as word length, into account. If the language pair is, for example, English-Finnish, the space in the translation segments is very limited due to differences in word structure. And since the sentences are translated whole without editing or shortening, the translator's options are often very scarce. (Karvonen & Karvonen N.A.) So, the most difficult task the translators have is finding a balance between using their creativity to make appealing translations and adhering to the restrictions given to them by the developers and the translated content (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 103).

² For example, the sentence *%s has found %x* contains variables *%s* and *%x*, which are replaced in the game by different values, like player or item names (*Player I has found a coin*).

2.2 Dubbing

In Finland, most of the translated television programmes and movies are subtitled (Vertanen 2007: 149), and dubbing is mostly used for animated cartoons and movies aimed at children under the age of 11 (Heikkinen 2007: 241). This is due to the expensive and time consuming production and suitability for the intended audience, as children do not need to concentrate on both the subtitles and the on-screen events when watching a dubbed product (Heikkinen 2007: 236-237). Games targeted at children are therefore dubbed for the same reasons, but also to widen the range of potential customers.

Dubbing – known as *voiceover* in the game localisation industry – is defined by Heidi Heikkinen (2007: 235) as replacing the original dialogue track of an audiovisual work with a dialogue track in the target language. The translator's aim is to produce natural sounding, easily pronounceable speech that conveys the message of the original source language with all its nuances (Tiihonen 2007: 175). In other words, the translator has to create an illusion of real speech, which is achieved through *aural and visual synchrony* (Heikkinen 2007: 237) with the help of the voice actor.

Aural synchrony is the equivalence of sound in the source and target texts. It consists of, among others, intonation, tempo, pitch and the use of dialects. These aspects often depend on the voice actor, not the actual translation process. (Heikkinen 2007: 237.) However, it is important that the translator keeps the character's speech pattern consistent and easy for the voice actor to recite, so the voice actor's performance is not affected by too difficult words or phrases (Tiihonen 2007: 179). When games are fully localised, aural synchrony in the voiceover is essential, as good voice acting is extremely important to the positive reception of the game (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 17).

Visual synchrony, on the other hand, is the consistence between the translation's wording, and the verbal and nonverbal information on screen. This includes *syllable synchrony*, *duration synchrony*, and *phonetic synchrony*. Syllable synchrony is achieved when the amount of syllables in a word is equivalent in both the source and

target language, whereas duration synchrony means that the duration of the target text is the same as in the source text when mouth movements are visible. This is closely connected to the perhaps most important part of visual synchrony: *phonetic synchrony* or *lip synchronisation*. (Heikkinen 2007: 237-238; Tiihonen 2007: 171.)

Lip synchronisation – or *lip sync* for short – means that the translated speech matches the speaker's mouth movements, which are called *visemes*, the visual representations of phones (Heikkinen 2007: 238, 242). Some phones, like round vowels and bilabial consonants, have very distinctive visemes and should not be replaced in the translation. That said, one viseme can represent more than one phone, so the limits are not always strict. (Heikkinen 2007: 241.) Lip sync is especially important in the beginning and end of a line, as well as during close-ups, and it is naturally not required if the speaker's mouth is not visible. However, other things, like head movements and additional noises, can still affect the translation. (Tiihonen 2007: 176-177.)

Still, perfect lip sync cannot be achieved when the phonetic differences between the languages are too great (Heikkinen 2007: 240). For example, Finnish words are long, so lines usually have to be shortened when the source language is English (Tiihonen 2007: 175). According to Heikkinen (2007: 240), in these cases it is best to concentrate on matching the visemes most visible to the audience. Lip sync accuracy also depends on the accuracy of the source material (Tiihonen 2007: 175). For instance, in animated movies the mouth movements are not always detailed, which makes it easier to achieve lip sync (Heikkinen 2007: 239). However, the animation in modern video games is often in high definition and very intricate, so the demand for good lip sync increases in game dubs. As the characters' mouth movements are usually very distinct and match the original voice track perfectly, the translator's task becomes more challenging. Still, this mostly concerns the animated story sequences between levels, as the animation is more lax during the actual gameplay.

In addition to lip sync, dubbed speech has to match the speaker's gestures, facial expressions and body language as well. This is called *kinetic synchronisation*. (Heikkinen 2007: 238.) It affects word order, as the emphases in sentences have to match the speaker's gestures. On the other hand, body language can also provide

nonverbal information that can be left out from the translation, for example when a character is pointing in a certain direction. Moreover, in animated cartoons, movies and games, body language is often exaggerated and a source of humour, which is why it is important to keep it consistent with speech. (Tiihonen 2007: 176.) Such is the case with *A Crack in Time* as well: a lot of the humour comes from the characters' exaggerated reactions and gestures.

All in all, the voiceover segments affect the quality of a fully localised game significantly, as localised voice acting is an effective way to engage the target culture player (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 167). A well done voiceover can draw the player into the game's world, whereas a lacking one can break the immersion. As stated above, quality voice acting performance combined to a quality translation is therefore critical to the game's good reception. How we can attempt to measure that quality will be discussed in the next subchapter.

2.3 Quality

What is quality in translation? It has been a largely discussed subject among Translation Studies, but translators themselves have never been able to reach a clear consensus on its definition (Abdallah 2007: 279). Kristiina Abdallah, who has studied the subject, says that translation quality is a very difficult concept to define, and depends largely on the critic's personal criteria (2005: 45-46). The assessment criteria, on the other hand, are often connected to the person's own view of the nature of translation in general, and can concentrate more on different aspects, such as the relationship between the target and source texts, or the reader (House 1997: 1).

Still, there are some norms that translators have often used in evaluating the quality of a translation. According to Abdallah, translation quality has most often been defined by comparing the translation to both the original and similar parallel texts through the critic's own subjective criteria, and the emphasis has been on the final product. Quality in translation is therefore seen simply as how good the translation is. However, in Abdallah's opinion that kind of definition is too narrow, and has not taken into account the translator's rights, the problems in the translation process

(such as too strict schedules and low pay), and mainly the new additional actors in the translation industry. (Abdallah 2007: 274-276.)

With the current prominence of translation companies, the process of translating has come to involve more people than simply the client and the translator. Abdallah says that the longer chain of actors in the modern translating process has also affected quality's concept. This is because those actors – clients, translation companies, and translators themselves – all define quality with different criteria. (Abdallah 2007: 273.) For example, for companies quality is often defined by its relation to the price, and the emphasis is on commercial success. Therefore, the "goodness" of a translation is only one part of quality, whereas others can be, for example, flexibility, and low price of the service. (Abdallah 2005: 45.)

Furthermore, the differing definitions and criteria of quality between the parties in the translation processes are a source of tension, and result in the weakening of the translator's position in the chain (Abdallah 2007: 273). For the developer and the publisher, for example, good sales are a very likely interest, whereas the translator often has a higher translation strategy they employ in their work (Abdallah 2005: 46). As a result, the translator might want to use more time to polish the translation, whereas the publisher just wants the final product quickly. What is more, often the parties are not even aware of their different definitions of quality, and use their own independently, creating conflict (Abdallah 2007: 273).

This is especially true in the game localisation industry. Like previously said in Chapter 2.1.1, in game localisation the chain of production is quite lengthy, and there is practically no direct communication between the client and the translators. Since the distance from the developer and the publisher to the actual single translator is so long, the different expectations and lack of communication between the ends of the chain are definitely an issue for quality. The conflicting definitions create a strain as to what kind of translation should be the strived for: a quick, but not so well done, or a good quality one that takes longer to produce.

Another factor affecting quality is the translator's awareness of the task's content (Gummerus & Paro 2001: 141). I have established before in Chapter 2.1.2 that in the

game localisation industry the source material can be obscure due to being incomplete or lacking context. The translated texts can also be modified during the language testing or voice recording. Therefore, it would be unfair to evaluate the "goodness" of the translation based solely on the work of the translator. How can we judge a game translation's quality if so many factors are largely out of the hands of its original creator? As said by Gummerus & Paro, "the quality of a translation is not dependent on the skills of the translator alone, but on the co-operation and communication of every actor involved in the production chain." Good quality can be ensured if all the actors in the process know their role in it. (Gummerus & Paro 2001: 142, 189.)

That is why Abdallah says that translators should clarify the concept of quality together: a clear definition by the translators themselves could make the translator's position in the chain more apparent (Abdallah 2005: 46). Furthermore, there should be a clear common definition for quality among all of the actors, so the conflicting ideas would not create misunderstandings and needless strife (Abdallah 2007: 281). The whole production network should find common standards for good quality, and strive to fulfil them. Thereby, it could also be easier to evaluate whether or not those standards have been met.

However, not even a solid definition could truly guarantee translation quality, because it largely depends on context (Abdallah 2007: 283), which once again holds very true in localised games. This is because even games that have been deemed by the player community to have a bad localisation can still sell well, even if the localisation is later criticised (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 328). "Bad" localisations can even achieve a high status in pop culture due players finding them amusing, as was the case with the infamous line "All your base are belong to us." from the English localisation of the game *Zero Wing*, which later became a popular Internet meme (Hathaway 2016). Because of this, it is not easy to say what makes a game localisation enjoyable to the players, and the nature of quality in game translations cannot be easily determined apart from the users' enjoyment of it (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 329).

So, how can we evaluate something that has no clear definition, depends on several independent factors, and can vary by context? Naturally, there is no sure way, but it has been said that one recognises quality when one sees it (Abdallah 2007: 280). So, according to Gummerus & Paro (2001: 138), one way to measure the quality of audiovisual content is "the total viewer experience", that is, how the translation works in its context in the audience's opinion. As the main aim of the video game medium is to entertain the player, the user's experience could be a viable method of evaluating whether or not the game localisation has fulfilled its purpose.

On the other hand, response-oriented methods of evaluating translation quality do have their flaws, mainly ignoring the translation's relationship to the source text (House 1997: 6). But, the evaluated game *A Crack in Time* is a localisation, a modified version of the original tailored to the Finnish audience instead of a straightforward translation. Thereby, its relationship to the original is bound to have changed already. And like said before, due to the context-related nature of video game translations, the enjoyment of the player is not simply determined by just a correct translation. Simply put, the game translation does not have to be "good" to be of good quality.

That is why this study will use the audience's enjoyment as the indicator of the Finnish dub's quality. As games are meant to be a source of entertainment, the user's experience serves as the basis and definition for good translation quality: the dub's quality will be deemed good if it pleases the target audience, or if they get the same experience as from the original version. The audience's opinion can be found out through a reception study, which will be discussed in the following subchapter.

2.4 Reception studies

In Translation Studies, reception studies can be simply defined as a form of research that concentrates on the audience's reception – their opinion and interpretation – of the translated material, such as literature or audiovisual works. A reception study can be conducted through various ways, such as a questionnaire, a group discussion, or an interview. In the past, reception studies on audiovisual material have been a very

rare research subject among Translation Studies, and even the studies that have been conducted often concentrated more on conventional forms of audiovisual translation, such as subtitling (Tuominen 2007: 295-296). Fortunately, the current prominence of localised video games is slowly prompting more and more studies about their reception as well.

Previously, the reception of audiovisual translations has been studied mainly from theoretical viewpoints instead of conducting empirical studies (Tuominen 2012: 45). Since theoretical studies do not take the audience's and the reception's essential attributes, such as the difference between the expected audience and the real audience, into account, the research has been lacking (Tuominen 2007: 296). For video game translations, empirical reception studies should be almost mandatory, since the games aim to provide an experience to the players. The audience's senses and feelings brought on by the localisations should therefore be a crucial measuring unit for game translations. Still, aside from linguistic testing, localised video games are not usually tested by actual users before their release (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 313).

The lack of reception studies can also hinder the work of the translators, as they have no way of knowing what their target audience and its expectations are like (Tuominen 2007: 297). Most often, translators are not even aware of what kind of criteria are used to assess their work, or who they are translating for (Hönig 1998: 31, 84). Therefore, it is difficult for translators to say with certainty what is expected of them, even though the translator often has an *implied reader* comprising of their own expectations for the possible readers or viewers. Still, as said by Tiina Tuominen: "The concept of the implied reader cannot provide an exhaustive picture [...] of audience preferences and attitudes." (Tuominen 2013: 46, 48.) The real reader or viewer is always different from the assumed one, so the real reception is also bound to differ in some way. That is why reception studies can shed light on the attitudes of the true viewership, and therefore help the translator meet their expectations better.

Moreover, since the aim of localised games is – like said many times before – the user's entertainment, there is a strong basis for studying the real reception of game localisations (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 312). In Finland, video game localisations

can already suffer from the audience's criticism in advance (Karvonen 2015), but how could the localisations be improved without first finding out what exactly hinders the user experience? Well conducted empirical reception studies for localised games could give some insight about the prejudice against localisations, and therefore pave way for improving the localisation quality and the audience's reception in the future.

2.4.1 Special traits of audiovisual reception studies

Since the multimodality of audiovisual works separates them from more traditional forms of translation, researchers conducting reception studies on them have to take these differences into account. According to Tiina Tuominen, there are several issues that researchers of reception should be aware of. (Tuominen 2007: 299.)

Firstly, in audiovisual works information is conveyed not only through the translation, but also sound and sight. These aspects – audio, video, and the translation itself – can complement or contradict each other, and thus affect the viewer's interpretation of the whole work. Furthermore, the aspects cannot really be separated without creating an unnatural reception situation, since the viewer would not usually see them apart. What is more, even visual information might be tied to a certain cultural context as well, as for example gestures and expressions might have different meanings in different cultures. (Tuominen 2007: 299-300.) In short, the research of reception does not involve merely just dubbed or subtitled words, but everything the work consists of together.

Secondly, in some cases the work can include parts of the original source text, such as the original voice track in a subtitled movie. In these situations, the audience is also receiving the original text, which can affect the translation's reception, sometimes into a more critical direction. (Tuominen 2007: 300.) For example, in Finland finding mistakes from the subtitles of English programs and movies seems to be the national pastime, as there are several websites and forums devoted to

gathering them³. In this reception study, the audience is indeed partially receiving the original text, as the audience is shown both the original English version and the dubbed Finnish version of the game. Therefore, the connection and contrast between the two are present more than if just the Finnish version was shown.

Lastly, the audience also sees the material very briefly during the study, and cannot be expected to memorise it completely during the viewing. This means that they cannot analyse it too profoundly or make very accurate observations, which should be taken into account when formulating the questions for the study. (Tuominen 2007: 300.) Additionally, this applies to the analysis and evaluation of the results as well.

In addition to the special traits of the medium, reception studies on audiovisual content involve people as the test audience. The researchers should therefore be aware of the problems that might arise during the study, which are discussed in the following subchapter.

2.4.2 Difficulties in conducting reception studies

Despite the need for reception studies (especially empirical ones), conducting them does have its challenges. First of all, as reception studies involve people, the researcher has to be aware of the unpredictability of humans. Every participant is an individual with their own background, views and expectations, which will also affect their behaviour and opinions. (Tuominen 2013: 117.) Additionally, conducting a reception study for children can be even more challenging. Children have, for example, a shorter attention span than adults, which can affect how long they are able to concentrate on the task at hand, as I found out during my own study.

Furthermore, due to the audience consisting of individuals with different preferences and backgrounds, it is difficult to define "the audience" for a work. On the basis of the individual answers of a single reception study, it is practically impossible to make any kind of universal generalisations that would apply to the whole audience or

³ The most famous one ran by Jouni Paakkinen can be found at <http://www.jounipaakkinen.fi/kaannos.html> (Accessed 23.04.2016).

all audiences of similar works. However, every reception study yields at least some information about approximate target audience and its expectations that the translator can benefit from later on. (Tuominen 2007: 297.)

Still, the answers the respondents give in a reception study also have their share of problems. If the answer options have already been provided for the test audience, the results may not be as varied. On the other hand, if the questions are open, the answers can differ greatly, since each respondent will interpret the questions in their own way, or they might not answer at all. Moreover, the researcher themselves will also apply their own interpretation of the answers to the results, and therefore every reception study is unavoidably subjective in at least some manner. Due to this subjectivity, it is also difficult to use previous research methods and results in new studies, or apply them to other contexts, especially if there have been only a few studies about the subject. (Tuominen 2007: 298, 302, 306.)

However, despite the difficulties, reception studies are not completely for naught, as they do reveal some aspects of the audience's attitude and use of translated texts. A reception study's test audience and their opinion of the translation might clarify the muddy concept of the larger target audience, give translators precious feedback on their work, and may help establish guidelines for future translations. (Tuominen 2007: 297-298.)

Now that I have laid out the groundwork for my research, I will finally move on to my own reception study and its results. I will start by introducing the research material and method in the following chapter.

3 Material and Method

In this chapter, I will introduce the study's source material game *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time* as well as the test audience and the research method. Three short parts of the game were chosen to be presented to the test audience in video format, both in English and in Finnish. There was also a two-part questionnaire made to be presented with the game material's different language versions. The first part tested the test audience's understanding of the English material, and the second was for evaluating the test audience's opinions on the Finnish version. The study's test audience consisted of 19 Finnish sixth-graders (approximately 11-12 years old) from southern Finland. The source material is introduced in Chapters 3.1 and 3.2, the questionnaire in Chapter 3.3, and the test audience and the course of the study itself in Chapters 3.4 and 3.5, respectively.

3.1 Source material

The game researched in this study is *Ratchet and Clank: A Crack in Time*, a humorous sci-fi action adventure game aimed at children and teenagers starting from age 7. It was developed by Insomniac Games and published for the PlayStation 3 system in 2009 by Sony Computer Entertainment, and it is part of the larger *Ratchet & Clank* series, which is very popular in Finland. Additionally, a new *Ratchet & Clank* game and an animated film based on the series are scheduled to be released in spring 2016 (Puustinen 2016), making the material relevant.

The plot of the game revolves around the main hero Ratchet, a young, adventurous mechanic of the lion-like Lombax race, and his long-time robot friend, Clank. In the beginning of the game, Ratchet, along with an egoistic super hero named Captain Qwark, is looking for Clank, who was kidnapped by the duo's arch nemesis doctor Nefarious at the end of the first game of the series. While Ratchet searches for Clank throughout space, Clank tries to prevent doctor Nefarious from using a powerful time controlling machine called the Great Clock for his own evil purposes.

Since the game is part of a larger series and contains hours upon hours of content, the material for the study was chosen from the very beginning of the game. That way, the test audience was not required to have any knowledge of the previous instalments, as the story is explained in the beginning, and the test audience had the same knowledge as new players would. The material used was limited to three different videos, which are detailed in the next subchapter.

3.2 Videos

Since having a large test audience play the game one by one would have taken an unreasonable amount of time, I decided to conduct the reception study by showing video clips of the game to the whole audience at the same time. For the material, I chose three short videos from the beginning of the game, so the viewing would not require any previous knowledge of the series, and the context would be the same to the test audience as it would be to new players of the game. The same videos were shown both in English and in Finnish, so there were six videos in total. The first two English videos also had English subtitles, as this option was available and most likely would be used in an authentic playing situation.

The first two videos were cutscenes – short cartoon-like computer animations to introduce the story and the setting. In the first video, Clank confronts doctor Nefarious in the Great Clock, and in the second Ratchet and Captain Qwark travel through space in search of Clank, and end up crash-landing on an unknown planet. The videos lasted for around 1 minute and 30 seconds, and 2 minutes, respectively.

The third video differed from the first two, as it was footage of the actual gameplay of one of the game's first stages. In the video, the player as Ratchet makes his way through an unknown jungle along with the computer controlled Qwark. As it is one of the earliest stages, written instructions on how to control the player character appear on screen in addition to the background chatter of the characters. The third video lasted for approximately five minutes.

I found the English videos on YouTube in high quality, but I captured all of the Finnish footage myself using a Digital Video Recorder card connected to a laptop, which was connected to the PS3 system. Since I found the English videos (including the gameplay footage) first, I ensured that the Finnish gameplay section did not differ from the English clip, even though it was recorded by a different person. Unfortunately, due to the age of the capture card, the quality of the footage suffered slightly, and so the Finnish videos had a slightly lower video and audio quality than the English ones. However, the characters' speech was completely understandable, and the video quality was still decent.

3.3 Questionnaire

To evaluate the understanding and chart the opinions of the test audience, I created a questionnaire⁴ in addition to the videos. The questionnaire was completely in Finnish, even though it was divided into the English and the Finnish sections. Due to the problems with open questions in reception studies, such as the larger amount of time they require, the questionnaire mostly consisted of ready multiple choice questions, ratings, and yes-no questions, although it did contain some open questions at the end. In the beginning of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to tell their gender, and whether or not they had played the game before. They could also tell their latest grade in English, although providing the information was optional.

The English section of the questionnaire was meant for measuring the respondents' understanding of the English videos, mainly the game's plot. It was further divided into three sections, one for each video. The first section had four multiple choice questions, and the second and third had five each. Additionally, one of Section 3's questions concerned the onscreen instructions for the correct action buttons during gameplay. Almost all of the questions had three different options of which only one was correct. The only exception was Section 1's Question 2, which had only two options: *Yes* and *No*.

⁴ See Appendixes for the original questionnaire and its English translation.

In order to prevent the respondents from simply guessing the right answers, I added option *d. I don't know* to every question in the English section. The respondents were encouraged to pick option D if they did not believe they knew the correct answer to the question. Naturally, this did not absolutely prevent guessing, so there is a margin for error. However, having multiple choice questions saved time, as the test audience did not have to write down their own answers. Additionally, the test audience could focus better on watching the game videos without having to write answers to the questions.

Like the English section, the Finnish section of the questionnaire was also divided into three subsections. Subsections 1 and 2 contained questions about the quality of the Finnish dub. For example, the respondents were asked to rate the voice acting and humour, and report whether certain elements, such as lip sync, bothered them in the dub. Section 1 was built around the first two cutscene videos, and Section 2 around the gameplay footage, but the questions themselves were similar in both sections.

For measuring the localisation's quality, the questionnaire had an explained scale of numbers for rating the different features of the game. The rating scale was as follows:

- 1 – poor
- 2 – tolerable
- 3 – average
- 4 – good
- 5 – excellent

The respondents were prompted to circle the number that best reflected their opinion. There were also simple yes-or-no questions, two of which had additional open B sections for more information if a certain option was chosen.

The third and final section of the Finnish part of the questionnaire contained four questions about the overall opinions on the difference between the versions. The respondents were asked if they saw any kind of large difference between the language versions, and if so, why, and whether or not the game versions felt the same to them. The respondents were also asked if they would rather play game's original English version or the localised Finnish version.

Since the original questionnaire was in Finnish so all of the students could understand the questions and possible answers, I translated the whole questionnaire into English for this paper. Therefore, all of the questions and answers in both the English and the Finnish sections of the Analysis Chapter are my own translations, and not the original options. The children's answers to the open questions in the Finnish section have also been translated.

3.4 Test audience

The main requirement for the reception study's test audience was that the children had to be young enough to fit the target demographic of the game, but old enough to have at least basic English language skills. This was because participating in the English segments of the study naturally required understanding of the foreign language. Moreover, the test audience had to have good enough English skills to recognise the differences between the original and localised versions.

Additionally, children who were old enough, and possessed good English skills or wanted to improve them could make a decision as consumers whether to play the game in English or in Finnish, as both language options are available in the Finnish localisation. Another additional requirement for the test audience was that the participating children had to have Finnish as their first language, or at least speak it fluently, as the Finnish localisation is meant for Finnish speakers. With those requirements fulfilled, the setting for the study would be as realistic as possible given the circumstances.

In Finland, children usually start learning a mandatory foreign A1 language in third grade around the age of nine⁵, and most often the A1 language is English (Paulavaara 2015). Therefore, the children in the test audience had to have chosen English in third grade, and be at least above grade four in order to possess good enough English skills to participate in the study. Therefore, my ideal test audience consisted of fifth graders, as children of that age have usually already studied English for two years, but are young enough to fit the target demographic.

⁵ Finnish National Board of Education 2014, page 219.

However, the plan changed later when I contacted my old elementary school in Kellokoski, Tuusula, in my search for a test audience. Very fortunately, the school agreed to collaborate in the study. At first, I suggested the fifth graders as the test audience, but the school's English teacher I was in contact with recommended the sixth graders instead. As they were only one year older and still within the limits of the game's target age, I agreed.

In the end, my test audience for the reception study became class 6B of the Kellokoski elementary school. The class had 19 students: 8 girls and 11 boys. The percentage of the boys who had played the game earlier was quite high (64%), as 7 of the boys had played the game. This might have affected the results, as the students might have remembered some aspects of the game and its story. However, none of the girls had played the game, which evened out the amount of students familiar with it. Additionally, 10 students told their latest English grade in the questionnaire. The average of those grades was 8.5, which is between *good* and *very good* on the Finnish grading scale.

It should be noted that one of the students was clearly not interested in the study, and answered *I don't know* in every question in the English section. Additionally, they gave the worst possible ratings in every evaluation question of the Finnish section and did not answer the open questions. Therefore, that student's results were left out of the final analysis, and so the final size of the test audience was 18 children.

3.5 The study

The reception study was conducted on the 21st of October in 2015 at the Kellokoski elementary school in Tuusula, southern Finland. It was held during class 6B's English lesson, and took approximately 45 minutes. The children sat mainly in pairs of two, as the desks of the classroom required it. In addition to the test audience and myself, three teachers including the English teacher were present. However, they did not participate in the study or disrupt it in any way.

I began the study by explaining its purpose and procession to the children. After that, I handed out just the English section of the questionnaire and asked the children to fill in the initial information, such as their gender and English grade. It should be noted that the survey was completely anonymous, and I could not identify the respondents by their answers in any way.

The reception study started properly with the viewing of the English videos. I asked the children to watch the videos and answer the questions about their content section by section. In particular, I emphasised the importance of choosing the *I don't know* option for questions they did not know the answers to. The children were free to take a look at the questions beforehand, but I advised them to not pay too much attention to them in advance. Furthermore, I asked them to answer independently without discussing the answers with the others, and the children complied with my request well during the duration of the study.

The videos were shown on a big screen via a projector, and each was shown only once. The children were very attentive during this part of the study. Especially the boys seemed interested in the animations, possibly due to the fact that *A Crack in Time* was an action/adventure game and familiar to many of them. Some of the students also commented the video to their nearby classmates, but mostly the students concentrated on watching. The girls were more prone to talking than the boys.

The first video shown was the first English cutscene. After the video, I gave the students some time to answer the questions in Subsection 1. I also requested them to put their pencils down on their desks as a sign for when they were finished. The children were fairly quick to answer, possibly due to the small amount of questions. After Video 1, the same process followed with the second English cutscene and Subsection 2. However, before Video 3, I explained to the children that the last video was in fact gameplay footage and slightly different, but the children answered the questions in Section 3 without any confusion.

After the students finished answering the last questions of the English section, I asked them to fold the questionnaire paper and keep it on their desk without touching

it again. I also asked them how challenging the questions were, to which the children modestly replied "A bit."

I then proceeded with the Finnish section and the proper reception part of the study. I handed out the second, Finnish part of the questionnaire and asked the children to take a look at the questions. I asked them to watch the videos again, now in Finnish, and pay attention to the voice acting, the humour, and the overall quality of the dub, and then answer the questions in the questionnaire. I also explained how the rating scale in the questionnaire worked. Additionally, I warned the students about the lower quality of the Finnish videos in advance, but as I later found out, not all of the students had listened to my instructions.

The Finnish part of the questionnaire took a little less time, since I showed both Finnish cutscenes 1 and 2 – together. During the viewing, the students also found out the right answers for the English part's questions, as the videos' content was the same. They commented the answers to their classmates, especially if the question had been particularly hard. However, no one tried to correct their previous answers as I had requested.

After watching the first two videos, I asked the students to answer the questions in Subsection 1 and evaluate the quality of the Finnish dub in the animations. The students, especially the girls, answered once again very promptly, although some pondered longer than others. This could have been because the evaluation questions required more independent thinking. When everyone was done with Subsection 1, I asked them to watch the final video of the Finnish gameplay footage and then evaluate its dub quality in Subsection 2. Furthermore, I reminded them to also answer the final questions on the other side of the questionnaire paper.

As it was nearly the end of the reception study as well as the end of their class, the students were considerably more restless when watching the last video. The five-minute length was also most likely a factor. Still, aside from increased chatter among the children, they were able to watch the video peacefully and answer the questions. As there were now two subsections with some open questions, this took them considerably longer. After every student was finished, I asked them to fold the

Finnish part of the questionnaire and put the English one inside it, so the answer papers would not get mixed. Afterwards, I gathered the papers personally from everyone and thanked them for participation, and the students left for recess while discussing their answers. I will proceed to do the same in the following analysis in Chapter 4.

4 Analysis

In this chapter, I will detail my findings from the results of the reception study. In Chapter 4.1 are the results of the English section of the survey, and in Chapter 4.2 the results of Finnish section. Each of the sections is split into three subsections according to the questionnaire's question sets. Both also contain a brief summary of the results at the end before the final thoughts in the Conclusion Chapter 5.

During my analysis of the material, I numbered the questionnaire papers, and made a table of the individual answers of each student. I then combined them into larger charts displaying the collective results of the group in every subsection. It should be noted that all of the questions and answers in both sections have been translated into English for the sake of clarity, as mentioned in Chapter 3.3.

4.1 English section

The English section of the questionnaire⁶ consisted of multiple choice questions about the English videos' content. Mainly, they were used to measure the test audience's understanding of the plot in the English version of the game. Most of the questions were quite difficult on purpose, as the right answers could usually be found in the characters' speech rather than the events themselves. Therefore, the answers could not be deduced by context alone.

Out of the questionnaire's options, only one was always correct, and the last was always the *I don't know* option, which indicated that the respondent did not believe they knew the correct answer and gave up. Questions left unanswered were also interpreted as unknown. Since there were two wrong answers for each question (with the exception of Subsection 1 Question 2 which only had one), those were regarded together simply as *wrong answers* and will be shown in red in the graphs. The correct answers will be shown in green, and the *I don't knows* in blue.

⁶ See Appendixes.

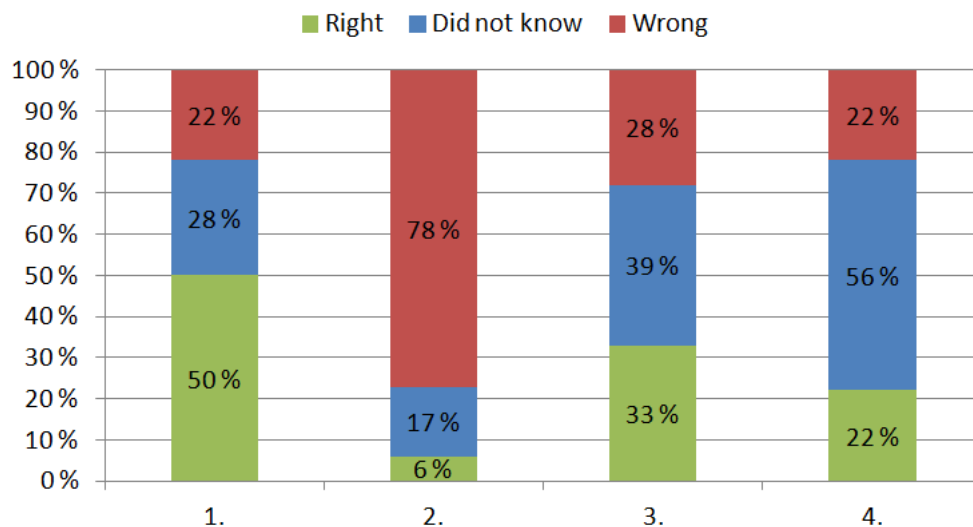
4.1.1 Subsection 1

In the first animated cutscene shown to the test audience, Clank – the secondary main character – confronts his kidnappers, doctor Nefarious and his butler Lawrence, in a time-manipulating machine called the Great Clock. Nefarious gives information about the Clock, and his plans and motives for using it are discussed. In the first subsection, there were four questions about the cutscene's content:

1. Who built the Great Clock?
2. Is the Great Clock exactly in the center of the universe?
3. What does Nefarious want according to Clank?
4. What does Lawrence want to do to the mnemonic station?

The results of the students' answers in this subsection are shown on Graph 1 below. The percentages in this and all of the following graphs have been rounded up.

Graph 1: Results of English Subsection 1



The answer to the first question *Who built the Great Clock?* was option *b. The Zoni*, which is simply stated by doctor Nefarious: "The Great Clock!...engineered by the brightest Zoni in all of existence..." As seen from the graph, half of the students answered the question correctly. However, 28% of the students said they did not know, and 22% chose a wrong answer. The problem here could have been the key

word *engineered*, the differing plural of *the Zoni* (in Finnish *Zonit*, whereas *a Zoni* is simply *Zoni*), or the large amount of other information Nefarious gives at the same time. However, as half of the children got the answer right, understanding the sentence did not seem too difficult, and might have depended on the children's individual levels of language skills or knowledge of that particular verb.

The second question *Is the Great Clock exactly in the center of the universe?* was a bit tricky: when talking about the Great Clock, Nefarious continues the phrase in the previous paragraph: "...and constructed in the exact center of the universe!" This would make the answer seem simple, but a moment later Nefarious adds the punchline: "Give or take fifty feet." Therefore, the correct answer was *b. No*, which only one of the students got right. The huge majority of the students incorrectly answered *Yes* (78%) or did not know (17%). This might have been due to the use of a foreign unit of measure, feet, or the expression *give or take*. Still, since the children did not seem to understand the phrase, the joke of the Clock's haphazard placement was most likely lost for the majority, which in a humour-oriented game such as *A Crack in Time* can change the experience somewhat.

The third question *What does Nefarious want according to Clank?* was chosen in order to find out if the children could understand Clank's speech pattern which is extremely sophisticated in order to portray his character as the "brains" of the main duo. The right answer was *c. Revenge*, which is found out when Clank says to Nefarious: "What lie did you tell the Zoni in your quest for vengeance?" The key word was the synonym for revenge, *vengeance*, which was a fairly difficult word for sixth graders, who have most likely been studying English for only a couple of years. This was reflected in the results: a combined 67% of the students either answered wrong (28%) or did not know the answer (39%). Therefore, the word *vengeance* seemed difficult for the majority, even though as much as a third of the students answered right. As the topic of Nefarious' supposed motivation hinged on this one word, most of the children seemed to miss an essential element in the game's story, mainly the main villain's possible motivation for his actions.

The fourth question *What does Lawrence want to do to the mnemonic station?* was once again intentionally difficult, and it was chosen to measure the test audience's

understanding of the sophisticated speech pattern of another character, Lawrence. He is portrayed as a parody of a stereotypical British butler, and thus he uses lengthy, difficult words and speaks with a British accent. One of his only two lines in the video is "Shall I prepare the mnemonic station again?", which would have made the answer obvious in the English version of the questionnaire. However, as the original test questions were in Finnish, the question became slightly harder.

The correct answer in the original Finnish questionnaire was b. *Valmistella*. Since there are simpler synonyms for the English equivalent *prepare* that the children most likely would have learnt first, such as *set up* or *make ready*, the right answer was not so easy to find. This was once again reflected in the results, as over a half of the students (56%) were not able to answer. The amount of right and wrong answers, on the other hand, was small, but even (22% each). Therefore, it could be said that Lawrence's speech in this particular case would seem mostly too challenging for the children, which might become a problem once the plot advances and Lawrence's role in it increases. Still, due to some correct answers, understanding him could depend on simply the student's vocabulary.

Those were the results of the first subsection. Next, I will move on to the second part of the English section which contained five questions.

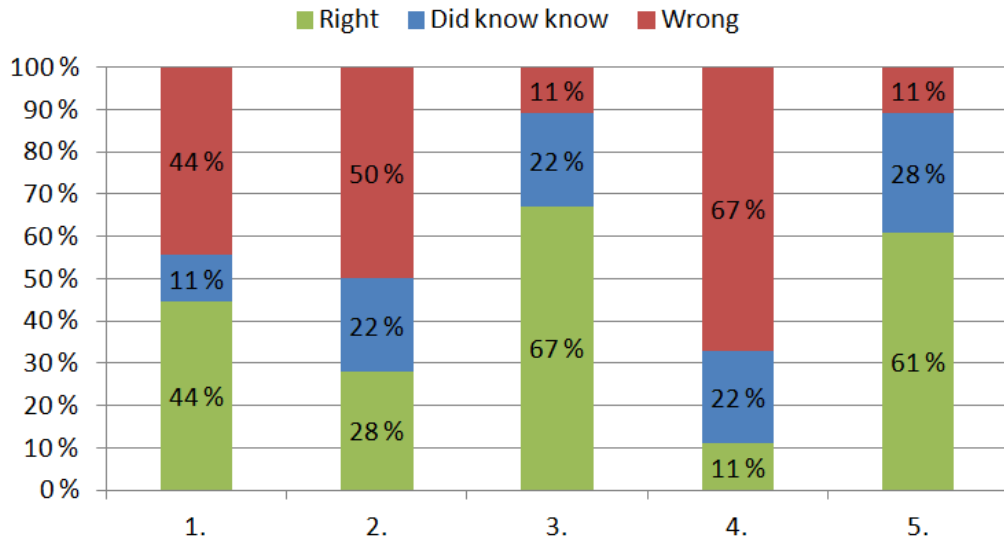
4.1.2 Subsection 2

The questions of the second subsection were formed around the second animated cutscene, where the main character Ratchet flies through space in search of Clank. Accompanying him is the egoistical superhero Captain Qwark, who gets on Ratchet's nerves. Eventually, the two run into a strange phenomenon in space, and crash on a nearby planet. The subsection consisted of the following five questions, and their results can be seen in the following graph:

1. What are Ratchet and Qwark doing?
2. How does Ratchet make Qwark stop annoying him?
3. According to himself, Qwark is:
4. Why is the area dangerous?

5. What is the computer warning them about?

Graph 2: Results of English Subsection 2



The first question *What are Ratchet and Qwark doing?* was to establish the children's understanding of the whole scene. It did seem fairly well comprehended, as 44% of the students correctly answered *b. Rescuing Clank*. The answer could be found quite simply in Qwark's opening monologue, where he explicitly mentions Clank's rescue, stating: "His [Qwark's] mission: Rescue the Lombax's one and only friend. Yep. Without Clank, Ratchet was alone in the universe." However, there was also an equal amount of wrong answers, most of which were *c. They are on hero duty*. Still, the *c.* answers had a certain logic behind them, because Qwark later says he has been excited "at the thought of getting back into the hero business." Therefore, the wrong answers did not necessarily mean some of the test audience did not understand his speech, but that they based their answers on the wrong line. Combined, the answers would indicate that the test audience did indeed understand these particular parts quite well, excluding the 11% who said they did not know.

The answer to the second question *How does Ratchet make Qwark stop annoying him?* was more implicit, and required some reading between the lines. At the end of his monologue, Qwark annoys Ratchet, who is piloting the space cruiser, by mocking Ratchet's loneliness without Clank. The right answer *a. By threatening* lied in Ratchet's casual, veiled threat: "You do realize this ship has an ejector seat, right?",

which implied Ratchet would launch Qwark into space if he did not stop. The line shows Ratchet's sarcastic attitude, establishes his character, and is also a good example of the humour of the series, which makes understanding it quite important to becoming invested in the characters and the game's world. However, 50% of the respondents gave a wrong answer, and 22% did not know, which could mean that the joke was too well hidden for the majority. The question was not impossible, as almost a third (28%) did answer correctly, so perhaps differences in listening comprehension should be taken into account. Still, the joke would seem to require translation in order for most of the children to understand it.

The third question *According to himself, Qwark is:* would seem to have been the easiest of all, as it had the most correct answers out of the whole questionnaire. A whole 67% of the students correctly responded *a. Excited*, only 11% gave wrong answers, and 22% did not know. What makes this particularly impressive is that Qwark never states the answer directly. Instead, he says "I've been a little antsy in my pantsy", which is not the most common of idioms, and could also refer to him being anxious, which was one of the wrong options. However, he also refers to his fists by stating "These wild stallions have been in the stable too long," and starts to perform fighting moves. So, perhaps Qwark's excited mannerisms played a part in conveying his emotional state, which shows how much information the visuals can provide. Since the question was added to measure understanding of Qwark's characterisation, it would seem that the message was indeed delivered to the majority successfully, even if it was not through language.

The fourth question *Why is the area dangerous?* was hard on purpose, and hinged on a single line of Ratchet's. When the two travel through space, Ratchet tells Qwark: "...keep your eyes peeled [...] this sector is crawling with mercenaries." The key word is of course *mercenaries*, which is quite an unreasonable word for Finnish sixth-graders to know, as it is not part of regular, everyday vocabulary. Therefore, it was no surprise that the large majority (89% combined) answered the question wrong (67%) or did not know (22%). However, some of the students (11%) did choose the right answer *c. There are mercenaries*. All of them had played the game before, which might explain their knowledge. Alternatively, they could have become familiar with the word through other similar media, like movies or other games. Still,

as games like *A Crack in Time* do contain a lot of similar difficult words and concepts as parts of the plot, they would seem to absolutely require translation to be understood by the target audience.

On the other hand, the results of Question 4 contradicted the results of the fifth and last question of Subsection 2, *What is the computer warning them about?* The right answer *c. Something unidentified* is given by the ship's computer, which exclaims: "Warning! Warning! Unidentified anomaly detected." After the warning, a blue wave of energy hits Ratchet and Qwark's ship, making it crash on a nearby planet. The vocabulary in the sentence was quite difficult, which made the amount of correct answers more impressive: 61% of the students answered right, only 11% answered wrong, and a little bit under a third could not answer the question (28%). This made the result the second best in the questionnaire.

However, the large amount of right answers could be explained by the children who had played the game before. Alternatively, the answers might have been chosen by a process of elimination: answer *a. An approaching weather phenomenon* was automatically wrong, as there is no weather in space, which sixth-graders could have learned. Also, both option *a.* and option *b. An enemy attack* did not have any visual support, as there were no visible enemies in the video, and the energy wave did not resemble any kind of weather phenomenon. A third explanation could be the stock phrase the computer uses which might be familiar to the test audience through TV or movies. Nevertheless, the most likely explanation is the aid of the visuals, which made interpreting the situation easier than in Question 4. Therefore, the translations would seem to be more crucial for understanding during the parts where there is no support from the visual material.

That concludes Subsection 2. I will now move on to the third and final subsection of the English part of the questionnaire, after which I will give a short summary of my findings from this section.

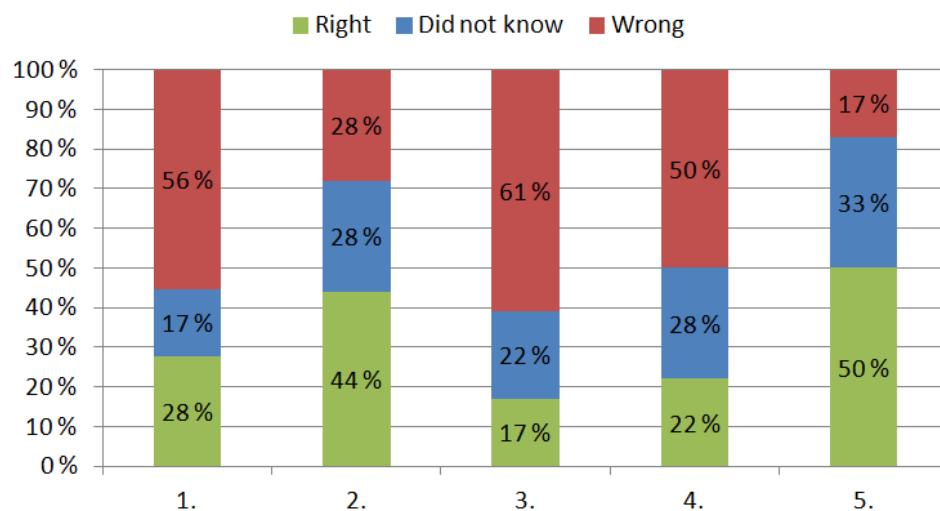
4.1.3 Subsection 3

The video for the third subsection differs from the first two, as instead of a cutscene, it is gameplay footage from Ratchet's first playable level. In the video, Ratchet and Captain Qwark try to find their way through a jungle on the planet they landed on, and counter various obstacles, monsters, and eventually some natives of the planet. In the gameplay footage, there are more things to pay attention to, such as the characters' almost constant chatter, and the tutorial instructions shown on the screen. However, there were no subtitles in any language. Therefore, it is understandable that certain elements might have passed by the students too quickly. However, the gameplay sections are the main part and purpose of the game, and the story progresses even during them, which is why it is important for the player to understand what is happening along with the instructions for moving the character.

The third subsection contained five questions, out of which Question 2 concerned the onscreen instructions. They and their results were as follows:

1. What is threatening Qwark (according to him)?
2. The square button is for...?
3. What does Qwark NOT do during the trip?
4. What is Ratchet's plan?
5. What is causing the phenomenon in the jungle?

Graph 3: Results of English Subsection 3



The first question *What is threatening Qwark (according to him)?* was to measure how much attention the children could pay to the background chatter of the characters during the gameplay. During the stage, the player, and by extension the computer-controlled Qwark, run into many enemies, which almost always prompts some kind of commentary from Qwark. During one encounter with some monsters in the beginning, he shouts: "Ratchet! Nature is attacking!", making the correct answer to the question *b. Nature*, which was the answer of 28% of the students. Still, over a half of them (56%) answered the question wrong, and an additional 17% did not believe they knew the answer. All of the wrong answers were *c. Monsters*, which was indeed true, but Qwark never refers to them as such. So, it would seem that in this question the visual information overrode the linguistic, or the speech in the background was not that easy to hear among all of the other elements of the game.

The right answer to Question 2. *The square button is for...?* was shown onscreen on several occasions. The instructions for using Ratchet's main weapon, the wrench, are seen for the first time in under a minute, when a box reading "Press [square] to swing the wrench" appears, and Ratchet attacks some hostile creatures with the wrench right afterwards. What is more, a command prompt for the square button is shown every time Ratchet uses the wrench to fix a bridge, which happens many times. The right command did not seem impossible to find, since 44% of the test audience gave the right answer *a. Using the wrench*. Still, it was less than the combined amount of wrong answers and did not know (28% each). Most of the wrong answers were *c. Throw the wrench*, which involved the square button, but also required the R2 button as told by another instruction box, so the answers were somewhat understandable. The students might have also been confused by the verb *swing*. Nevertheless, since knowing the right commands for moving the character are crucial for gameplay, the results would suggest that the instructions should be translated at least in some form, like in the manual, so everyone can understand them.

The third question *What does Qwark NOT do during the trip?* was another way to find out how much of the background chatter the children could understand, but more in general. During the stage, Qwark provides a lot of comic commentary, which includes, for example, complaining about how the rain will ruin his outfit. He also monologues for his super hero log by describing the events around him in a

glorified way. Qwark's chatter is quite important for the game experience: it establishes his character as the comic relief, the tone of the game, and makes being stranded on an unknown planet less bleak for the characters and the player. However, during all of his rambling, Qwark never tells the player or Ratchet directly what to do, but rather introduces the problem, and Ratchet comes up with a solution. The correct answer was therefore *a. Give instructions*. Only a tiny minority, 17%, answered correctly, and over half of the test audience (61%) answered wrong along with the 22% who did not know. Admittedly, the question was difficult, as there was no single line to give away the answer, but the test audience had to listen to Qwark the whole time. The lack of subtitles made the task even harder. Still, judging by this and Question 1, the speech in the gameplay sections does seem to require translation to be understood, perhaps due to the amount of other elements that require the player's immediate attention, such as the enemies.

Still, understanding the background chatter during the gameplay is important because the plot does advance even during those sections, and the topic of discussion is often the characters' goal. The answer to Question 4. *What is Ratchet's plan?* was hidden in one of the conversations between Ratchet and Qwark. When the player is fixing a bridge, Qwark asks "What's the plan anyway?", to which Ratchet responds: "Well, where there are bridges, there are people. Where there are people, there are ships. You see where I'm going with this?" The answer *b. To look for locals and get a ship* was therefore very implicit, so it was no surprise that half of the students (50%) did not answer correctly, and 28% did not know, leaving 22% with the right answer. On the other hand, answer *c. To find a way out of the jungle* was once again very logical, but never stated outright. The result would therefore seem to support those of the previous questions, and the speech seems too difficult or vague to be properly understood.

Subsection 3's fifth question *What is causing the phenomenon in the jungle?* was also the last question of the whole English section. The question was based on a small subtitled cutscene in the middle of the level, where Ratchet and Qwark encounter a blue ray of light that has suspended various objects and even birds in the air. Qwark comments that "It's like time is all – not working", and later in the game the cause of the anomaly is indeed revealed to be the Great Clock. As the Clock and its effect on

time are an essential part of the game's plot, the scene is quite crucial, since it shows the consequences of the Clock's misuse and malfunctioning.

However, perhaps the visuals and the addition of subtitles in the small cutscene combined with the simple language made the answer easier to find, as 50% of the students correctly answered *c. An error in time*. The wrong answers were a small minority (17%), and a third of the test audience (33%) did not know. The high amount of right answers could have been caused by several reasons: the scene was actually focused on the event without distractions, it visually showed what was happening, and it had subtitles to support the speech. That way, there were more sources of information supporting each other, making interpreting the situation easier. Still, the other half of the students did not get the question right, which seems to suggest that for some of them the scene and the English version in general were not as easily understandable even with visual aid. In combination with the results of the previous questions, it would seem that translating the game would be a good solution if the whole target audience is to fully enjoy the game's story and characters.

4.1.4 Summary of the results of the English section

To conclude, there was no one who knew the right answer to every question, not even among those who had played the game before. Furthermore, there were only four questions out of 14 that at least 50% of the respondents knew the correct answer to, and most of the time the majority chose either the wrong answer, or did not know it. In short, it would seem that the first part of my hypothesis was right, and the English used in the game in these scenes was slightly too difficult for most of the test audience. Therefore, they missed both jokes and information vital to the game's story. Although some of the questions were difficult purposefully and the sci-fi genre and themes of the game made for complicated vocabulary, translation would seem to be required for children to understand and enjoy the game's story, especially if they are even younger than the students in this study. However, as these were simply the results of one small test audience, it is impossible to generalise them to apply to the whole target audience.

Furthermore, there was not a single question that no one got right, even if it were only some of the students. Although the possibility of simply guessing existed, and some of the students had played the game before, this would suggest that it would not be impossible for the children to understand some of the key elements of the plot and make progress in the game. Understanding seemed to be even easier if there was visual information filling in the blanks, which proves how much the aspects of audiovisual content can support each other. However, since so many jokes and so much speech were lost, it would be safe to say that the game experience would not be exactly the same for them as for the source audience. To compare, the experience the Finnish dub gave the test audience is what the next Finnish section containing the results of the proper reception study will be about.

4.2 Finnish section

The Finnish section⁷ contained the actual reception study, and consisted of 15 questions asking the test audience for their opinions of the various aspects of the Finnish dub version. Since the Finnish section came right after the English one, the children had already seen the original versions of the videos once, and could compare the original voiceover to the Finnish dub. The questions concerned elements that were important for either enjoyment and immersion in the game world, or the more technical aspects, like the instructions for progressing. As explained in Chapter 3.3, for rating the different aspects of the game, the questionnaire gave the test audience a number scale from 1 (worst) to 5 (best). The children were advised to circle the number that best represented their opinion of each aspect in question. There were also simple yes-no questions, and open questions in the final subsection of the questionnaire.

Like the English section, this section was also divided into three subsections. Subsection 1 concerned both Finnish videos 1 and 2, Subsection 2 the Finnish video 3, and the final section the overall differences between the game versions. The results of the reception study will also be introduced in that order.

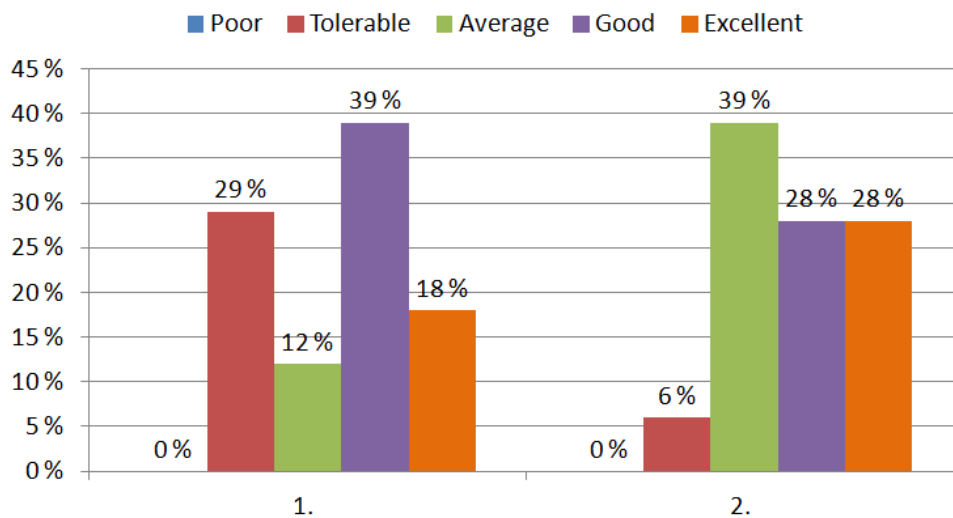
⁷ See Appendixes.

4.2.1 Subsection 1

In this section, there were seven questions about the Finnish dub videos 1 and 2 which contained the high quality animation cutscenes that were shown to the test audience back to back without pauses. For clarity, the questions will be introduced two or three at a time, along with the graph of the collective results. The first two questions were about the aural synchrony of the dub, and their results are as follows:

1. How good was the voice acting?
2. How well did the Finnish voices fit the characters compared to the English ones?

Graph 4: Results of Finnish Subsection 1, Questions 1 and 2



Since voice acting is a very important part of a localised game's reception like mentioned in Chapter 2.2 (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 17), the first question of the Finnish section *How good was the voice acting?* was about the Finnish voice acting's quality. As seen from the graph, the reception of the voice acting was somewhat mixed, but leaned more on the positive side, since a combined 69% said that the quality was at least *average*, and the majority (39%) said it was *good*. Still, although no one answered *poor*, almost a third of the students called the voice acting just *tolerable*, and one student even commented in the final section of the questionnaire that the Finnish voices were "really annoying". Nevertheless, the average rating for the voice acting was 3.4, making the general opinion of it average. Therefore, it could be said that for the majority, the voice acting was at least good enough.

The second question *How well did the Finnish voices fit the characters compared to the English ones?* was similar to the first one, but was more for comparing the original English voice actors to the Finnish ones. As the characters' voices are an important part of their characterisation, the dubbed voices should suit the characters as well. This time the reception was definitely positive, as only 6% said the similarity was merely of a *tolerable* level. The majority, 39%, called the match of the dubbed voices *average*, and equal amounts of the students called the match either *good* or *excellent* (28% each). In total, the average rating was approximately 3.8, 0.4 points higher than the average of the voice acting's quality. This would suggest that the Finnish casting and voice acting performances had been appropriate for the spirit of the original characterisations in the opinion of the students, as even some of those critical of the voice acting seemed to have rated the matching higher.

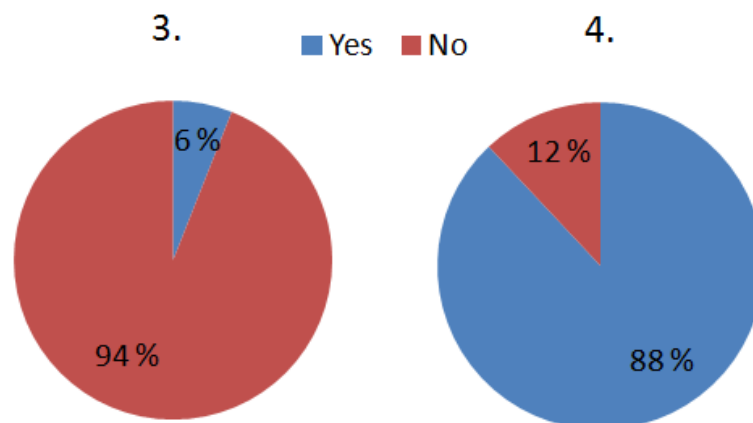
Since Questions 1 and 2 were for evaluating the reception of the dub's aural synchrony, Question 3 was for finding out opinions about the visual synchrony, more precisely lip sync. The fourth question and its B part, on the other hand, measured the overall clarity of the plot in the Finnish version, since understanding the story is such an essential part of the experience. The questions and their answers were as follows:

3. Did the differences in speech and lip sync bother you?

4. Was the plot easy to follow?

4b. If not, why so?

Graph 5: Results of Finnish Subsection 1, Questions 3 and 4



Since the animation of the cutscenes of *A Crack in Time* is high definition and resembles the quality of animation studios like Pixar, the characters' mouth movements are often very intricate and clearly match the visemes of the original English voice track. Because the original lip sync is so clearly visible in the localisation, I wanted to ask the students if there was enough difference in the Finnish speech and the original animation to be a hindrance. However, this did not seem to be a problem, since as seen from the graph 94% of the students said the differences did not bother them. This does not necessarily mean the dub's lip sync was perfect (as evidenced by the 6% who said *Yes*), but that it did not hinder the watching experience for the majority.

The plot of the game seemed fairly well understood too, since a large majority, 88% of the students, answered *Yes* to Question 4. *Was the plot easy to follow?* Therefore, the story of the game seemed clearly conveyed, which enables the target players to enjoy it. Since such a big portion of the test audience thought so, it would also suggest that the results of the English section of the questionnaire were not simply caused by errors in comprehension or complicated storytelling. On the other hand, seeing the clips twice, even if in two different languages, could have helped the students to understand the story better.

However, there were two students who responded that they could not follow the plot that well. That said, I believe that this was not because of the localisation itself, but due to miscommunication during the study situation. I mentioned in Chapter 3.2 that the Finnish video quality was lower because of the capture card I used, which I told the test audience before the viewing. Still, it would seem that some of the students had not listened to my explanation of the Finnish videos' lower quality, and mistakenly believed it to be an attribute of the game itself. This is because one of the students supported their answer with "Because you can't make [the speech] out." The same seemed to be true for the other respondent as well, because their explanation was "Everything was so unclear." Therefore, it would stand to reason that the results were affected by simple human error, which has to be accepted as a part of the reception study.

The last three questions of the first Finnish subsection were a mixed group. Since *Ratchet & Clank* is a comedic series, humour is a very important part of the playing experience, which is why Question 5 concerned its quality in the opinion of the test audience. Additionally, there were differences in the speaking patterns of the main characters, so I wanted to know if that would have hindered the experience, hence Question 6. For the very final question of Subsection 1, the test audience was asked to rate the quality of the dub in its entirety.

Below are the questions and the graphs of the results. It should be noted that there is no graph for question 6 due to the test audience's unanimous answers.

5. How would you rate the humour in the Finnish version? (How funny were the jokes?)

6. Did Ratchet's colloquial language bother you?

7. How would you rate the Finnish version as a whole?

Graph 6: Results of Finnish Subsection 1, Questions 5 and 7



Humour is a huge factor in the player enjoyment, but rather difficult to translate, as not many jokes translate directly from one language to the other. Furthermore, like all of the *Ratchet & Clank* games, *A Crack in Time* includes a lot of verbal humour, such as Qwark assuring Ratchet that his "vigilance is both eternal, and peripheral." Therefore, the jokes were not usually translated directly, but were rather domesticated. For example, in the Finnish version Qwark tells Ratchet that he is "Tarkkana kuin porkkana ja kurpitsa." The difficulty of translating verbal humour

seemed to be reflected in the test audience's answers to Question 5. *How would you rate the humour in the Finnish version?* While mostly positive, the results included the rating *poor* for the first time: 17% of the respondents answered *poor*, and an additional 6% only *tolerable*. And while the majority of the students rated the humour *good* (44%) or *average* (33%), no one answered *excellent* for the first time as well. The average rating was therefore 3.06, lower than that of any other aspect. So while the jokes were fine for the majority of the students, the humour seemed to be the weakest attribute of the Finnish dub in their opinion.

The answers to the sixth question surprised me. In the Finnish dub, the main character Ratchet speaks informal Finnish, and uses, for example, colloquial pronouns (*mä*, *sä*, and *tää* instead of *minä*, *sinä*, and *tämä*). The reason this type of speech was chosen for him might be to reflect his youth, and to make his speech sound simpler in comparison to Clank, who speaks rather intelligently. Also, informal Finnish might have been easier to fit into the mouth movements of the character, making the lip sync better. As Ratchet is the only major character who speaks informal Finnish, I wanted to ask the test audience if the difference in the characters' speaking patterns was distractive.

Like I mentioned before, there is no graph for question 6. *Did Ratchet's colloquial language bother you?*, because the responses were completely unanimous: all 100% of the students said that the main character's informal Finnish was not disruptive at all. This might be due to the test audience's young age, living in southern Finland where colloquial Finnish is the norm, or the way of speaking being so ubiquitous and accepted in modern Finnish media. Nevertheless, having the main character speak colloquial Finnish while most of the cast speaks more formally did not seem to be a problem at all.

The first subsection's very last question 7. *How would you rate the Finnish version as a whole?* was the most interesting, because the answers gave a small summary of the test audience's opinions in general. In the end, the response to the Finnish dub, or at least to the animated cutscene parts, seemed largely positive: over a half (56%) of the students rated the dub *good*. Furthermore, the second most popular answer was *excellent* (22%). Combined with the 17% of *average* answers, almost all of the test

audience, 94%, thought the quality of the dub was average or better, with only 6% calling it *tolerable*. This would indicate that even those who rated the humour *poor* in question 5 did not think of the dub as *poor* as a whole. Even the average rating for the whole dub was 3.9; close to good, and higher than any other rating.

So, based on the responses to the question it would seem that even though the dub had some aspects that the test audience thought were weaker, like the translation of the jokes, the other ones covered for them and created a decent final product. However, the dub was not perfect, as there was criticism of the voice acting and the translation of humour. Still, the majority of the test audience seemed to enjoy these parts of the Finnish dub, fulfilling our conditions for good quality at least partially.

I will now move on to Subsection 2 which had questions addressing the gameplay section of the game based on Video 3.

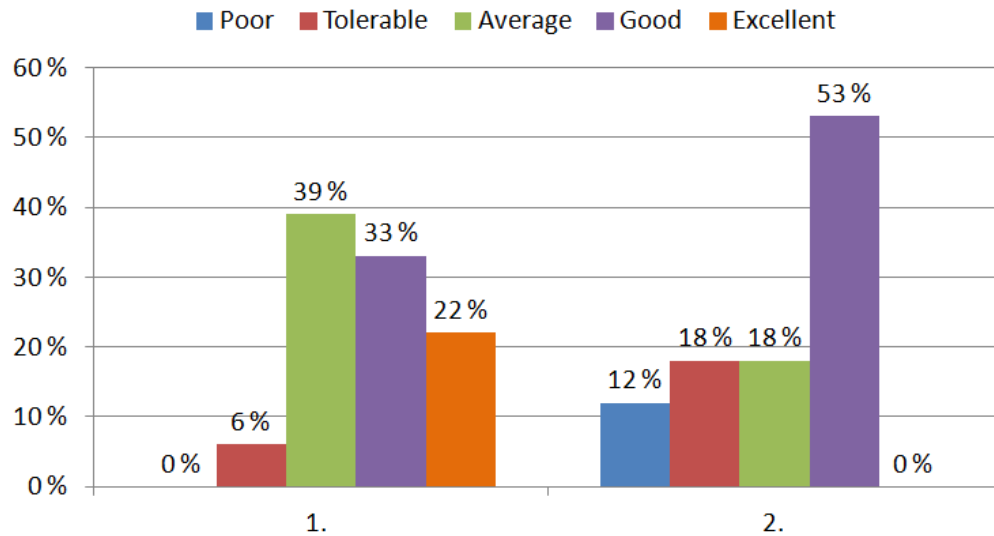
4.2.2 Subsection 2

Subsection 2 went together with the gameplay footage of the Finnish Video 3 which was also the last video to be viewed. Due to the differences between the formats in Videos 1 & 2 and Video 3, and an overlap of some dub attributes – such as Ratchet's spoken language – there were less questions in this subsection. In hindsight that was good, since towards the end of the reception study the children became more restless and could not concentrate fully, but talked more instead. This was understandable, as almost 45 minutes had passed, and it was close to lunch hour.

There was also no need for so many questions. Since the camera is behind the characters most of the time and the animation is not as precise during the gameplay sections, visual synchrony was not as important. That is why the only question about the gameplay section's voice acting was about the aural synchrony in Question 1. The second question once again addressed the translation of the game's humour. Below are the questions and the graphs of the results:

1. How good was the voice acting?
2. How would you rate the humour?

Graph 7: Results of Finnish Subsection 2, Questions 1 and 2



Like said in the analysis of the English section, the background chatter of the characters is an important part of the storytelling and the player's immersion in the game. Moreover, in the gameplay sections there are also more voiced computer-controlled side characters who give the player missions or information. That is why I wanted to ask the test audience's opinions on the voice acting of the gameplay section separately. The differences to the results of the same question *How good was the voice acting?* in Subsection 1 were interesting. While there were no *poor* ratings in either, the amount of *tolerable* ratings for the gameplay section had decreased dramatically from 29% to 6%. Instead, the *average* rating had become the most popular (39%). Additionally, the amount of *good* ratings had decreased slightly (from 39% to 33%), but the *excellent* ratings had increased (from 18% to 22%). The average rating of the gameplay voice acting was therefore 3.7, 0.3 points higher than that of the cutscene voice acting.

Since I could not ask the children afterwards, it is hard to say what caused the difference. One reason could be the different characters and therefore different voices in the videos. For example, doctor Nefarious' voice is really shrill and he tends to yell a lot, which could have been annoying to the students. Since he is absent from the gameplay section, it could have affected the results. Furthermore, because nothing really dramatic is happening during Video 3, the characters speak more calmly, and there are more background sounds to drown the voices out. Another

reason could be that during the reception study, the children might have gradually got more used to the Finnish voices. It would be really interesting if this were true, since it could mean that the reception of dubbed localisations could get better over time. However, these are only speculations of possible reasons, and finding out the truth would require a study of its own, although it would provide an interesting possibility for further research.

A similar situation happened with the results of the second question *How would you rate the humour?* The humour in the gameplay section consisted mostly of Qwark's commentary (such as telling the monsters to "keep the change" while shooting them), which was translated directly instead of the more domesticating approach of the cutscenes. This change in translation strategy could have been due to the localisation process. Since the gameplay is almost never shown to the translators for security reasons, the translator most likely did not have any context for the strings of lines they received, so the translation had to be direct to avoid mistakes.

The different strategy might have been the reason for the slight change in the results. Like in Subsection 1, no one called the humour *excellent*, but the amount of *good* answers had increased from 44% to 53%, so for over a half of the students the humour was good. On the other hand, the more critical answers had changed as well: the *poor* ratings decreased from 17% to 12%, whereas the *tolerable* ratings increased from 6% to 18%, evening out the results. The amount of *average* ratings was 18% as well, which was quite a decrease from the 33% in the first subsection. Once again, it seems that the humour was not as highly regarded as the other attributes of the dub, although the reception was a little more positive, even if divided. This was reflected in the rating average as well, which increased very slightly from 3.06 to 3.1.

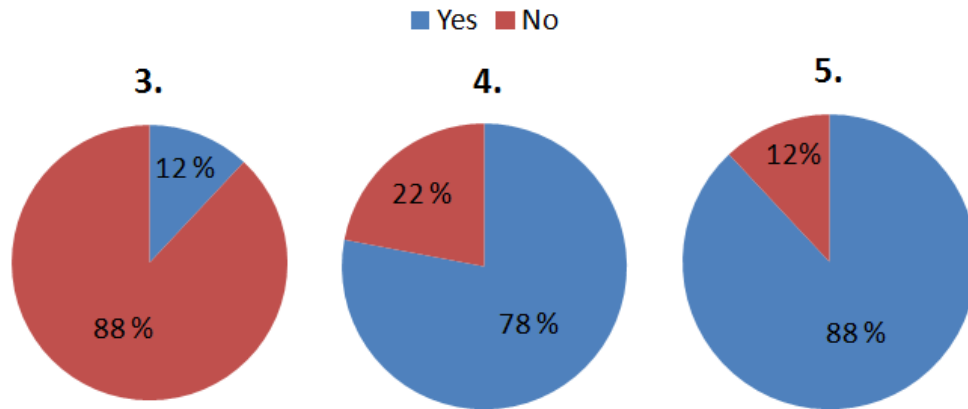
The rest of the second subsection's questions addressed the elements that are important to the plot, progressing in the game, or learning how to control the character. There was also a hidden purpose for Question 3. The last three questions of Subsection 2 and their answers were as follows:

3. Did something in the characters' speech bother you at any time?

3b. If so, what?

4. Were the instructions included in the characters' speech (where to go/what to do) clear?
5. Were the instructions shown on screen clear?

Graph 8: Results of Finnish Subsection 2, Questions 3, 4, and 5



In addition to finding out the general opinions of the voice acting, Question 3. *Did something in the characters' speech bother you at any time?* was added as a kind of trap for the test audience, because in the Finnish dub there was an inconsistency in the speech of one character. At the end of the video, a non-playable character runs up to Ratchet and Qwark and shouts "Apua! Kiltti, auta!" (Help! Please help me!) It is clear she is speaking to the two of them, since she turns her head to speak to both, but the Finnish plead is targeted to a singular entity instead of plural, which would be *Kiltit, auttakaa!* instead. This could have been due to the translator's mistake during the translation process: if the translator got the line in a list of text strings with minimal context, they had no way of knowing whether the original line was addressing one or more people, as in English the singular and plural are the same. Therefore, the inconsistency was understandable. Nevertheless, I wanted to know if the children would notice it during the viewing.

However, in the end no one in the test audience noticed anything wrong in the video, as 88% of the respondents said nothing in the characters' speech was particularly bothersome. Even the complaints of those 12% who said *Yes* were caused by the bad quality of the Finnish video, as they thought the static was a part of the Finnish version (like mentioned in the results of Subsection 1 Question 4). However, it is unsure whether that kind of inconsistency did simply not bother the students in

general, or if they were just not paying enough attention to such detail, as the children were quite restless at the time.

The purpose of the fourth question *Were the instructions included in the characters' speech (where to go/what to do) clear?* was to find out if the test audience understood the instructions imbedded in the background chatter. Like mentioned many times before, during the level Ratchet and Qwark talk about what they should do and where they should go. For example, when Qwark cannot break through a door, Ratchet says he will find another way. These are instructions for the player, integrated into the game world without breaking the fourth wall, which makes understanding them important for making progress. Judging by the results, they seemed to be clear enough, as 78% answered *Yes*. However, almost a fourth of the students (22%) disagreed. This might have been yet another side effect of the lower audio quality of the video, as the following results of Question five would suggest. Alternatively, the instructions could have been just vague in general, or required more concentration to notice.

In addition to the game's imbedded instructions, there are also written instruction boxes shown on the screen at times. Since the onscreen instructions include pictures of the control buttons, the translated text strings most likely included code placeholders for the buttons. Because the placeholders cannot be changed or conjugated, they are sometimes quite hard to accommodate into Finnish sentences. That is probably why some of the time the instructions had been translated with the button in the beginning of the phrase, followed by the instruction⁸, while sometimes the button was integrated into the sentence⁹.

I wanted to know whether the varying instructions were clear enough to follow in the opinion of the test audience, so the fifth question was *Were the instructions shown on screen clear?* Once again, the majority seemed to think so, as 88% said *Yes*. However, 12% of them thought otherwise, and one of the students even commented in the end that "The Finnish version had stranger instructions," although it is unclear which instructions they were referring to and what this weirdness entailed. What is

⁸ For example "[button] Tartu vintturin kampeen."

⁹ For example "Tulita painamalla [button]."

also noteworthy is that the amount of students that thought the written instructions were unclear was smaller than of those who said the same about the spoken ones. This supports the theory that some of the students were once again swayed by the recording quality in Question 4. Still, even with that margin of error, it could be said that while the instructions seemed clear enough for most of the test audience, there was some room for improvement in both spoken and written instructions.

Those were all the questions specific to the videos shown to the test audience. I will now move on the final section which contained the summarising, general questions and answers about the language versions. After that, I will briefly recapitulate the results of the Finnish section before the Conclusion Chapter.

4.2.3 Final section

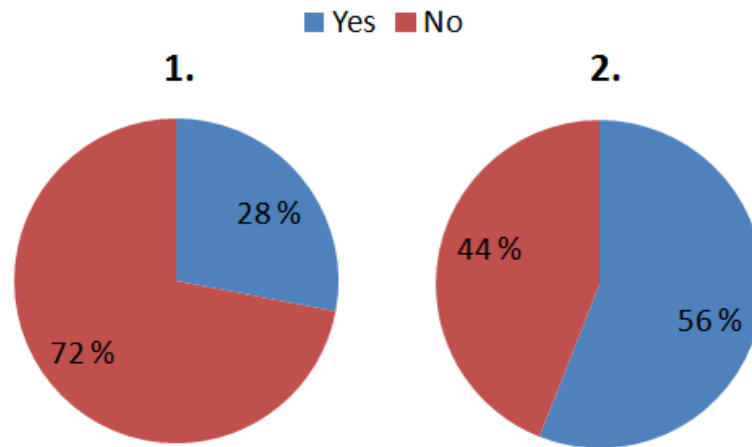
In the final section of the study, the students were asked for their last thoughts about the differences between the Finnish dub and the original English version in general. The first two questions were yes-no questions with Question 1 having an additional open part depending on the answer. The very last question was the only mandatory open question. There were very few open questions on purpose, because those would have taken longer to answer. The students were also instructed to give short answers to make them more precise, which turned out to be a good solution due to the growing restlessness towards the end. The three questions were not numbered in any way in the questionnaire, but for clarity, they will be numbered here. Here are the first two questions and their results:

1. Do you think there was some kind of big difference between the English and Finnish versions?

1b. If so, what?

2. Did the English and Finnish versions feel the same to you?

Graph 9: Results of the Final Section, Questions 1 and 2



The first and second questions were very similar, but served different purposes. Question 1 *Do you think there was some kind of big difference between the English and Finnish versions?* was for finding out the versions' key differences as attributes, which is why it had an additional B part for pointing them out. As seen from the graph, most of the test audience (72%) could not think of any huge differences between the original English game and the localised version. This would indicate that the localisation had succeeded in staying true to the original at least on a practical level. However, 28% of the students said *Yes*, but they seemed to be in favour of the Finnish version, as four of them commented that the Finnish version was easier to understand and follow. Therefore, the difference – although not connected to any technical aspects – was positive in their opinion. Still, there were a few of those who commented on the faults of the Finnish version, like the aforementioned "stranger instructions", and one student whose opinion was swayed by the recording quality. All in all, it seemed that the students mostly thought the versions were alike, or the language difference was a positive change.

Question 2 *Did the English and Finnish versions feel the same to you?*, on the other hand, was more for seeking out the feeling-based impression the test audience got from the game versions. Due to the different language and technical reasons, it is obviously impossible for the localisation to be identical to the original. However, the localisation could still retain the original spirit of the source game and provide the target audience with the same experience and enjoyment. I wanted to find out

whether or not this was the case, and if there was a difference between the results of the questions.

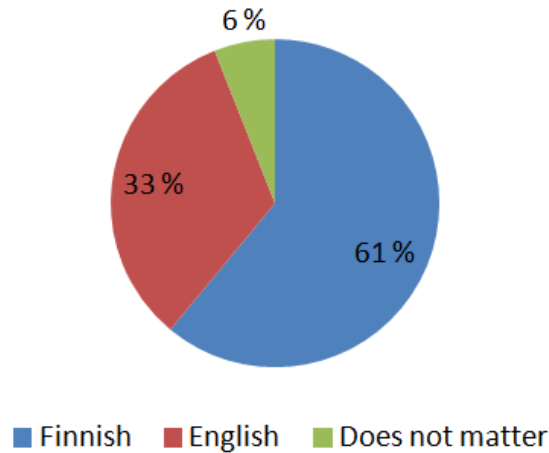
And indeed, this time the results were different, and more divided than those of any other question. A scarce majority of the test audience (56%) thought the games felt the same, but nearly the same amount of students (44%) said that they did not. What is especially interesting is that according to the results, some of the students who said they did not see much of a difference between the language versions still thought the English and Finnish versions *felt* different. This would seem to prove that the language does change the experience somewhat. After all, the mother tongue is an important tool for self-expression, thinking, and feeling, and language is a major factor in any experience (Karvonen 2015).

Still, it is unclear whether or not this difference in feeling is a positive or a negative aspect, as one of the students commented that the English version was "more authentic". On the other hand, many of those who said the Finnish version was easier to understand and preferred it also felt a difference, and one student said in the final comments that "It feels more natural to play in your own language." So having the characters speak the player's language could possibly either immerse them in the fictional universe better, or break the illusion by reminding them too much of everyday reality. The only thing that can be said with any amount of certainty is that the used language can change the experience to some extent, but how much seems to depend on the individual. Nevertheless, the difference in the language versions of *A Crack in Time* did not seem too drastic, since for the majority – although it was smaller than usual – there was no difference at all.

The final section's third and the whole reception study's last question *Would you rather play the game in English or in Finnish?* was, in my opinion, the most interesting one. It was placed as the final judgement between the language versions as a whole despite any weak aspects the versions might have, and whether the test audience saw any differences between them or not. Its results can be seen in the following graph:

3. Would you rather play the game in English or in Finnish? Why so?

Graph 10: Results of the Final Section, Question 3



The results are in correlation with the reception study. After all, the reception of the Finnish version was mostly positive, and the different aspects were usually rated average or better. The Finnish version was also said to be easier to understand, and the plot easier to follow, so it is no surprise that the majority (61%) chose the Finnish version in the end. Some of the students commented¹⁰ their choice like this:

'In Finnish because I understood the plot better.'

'In Finnish, it's easier to play with.'

'In Finnish, easier to understand.'

Some of the students preferring the Finnish version also said that they could not understand the English version that well:

'In Finnish, I didn't understand almost anything from the English version.'

'I'd play in Finnish, because in some parts I couldn't understand the English.'

All in all, nearly all of the reasons for choosing Finnish involved the better clarity and intelligibility of both the plot and the game. The only major exception was the student mentioned before who felt Finnish was a more natural playing language. Hence the choices these students made seem to rely mostly on the experience and feeling – understanding the events and how to play, and getting involved in the story. In their opinion, the playing experience would be better in Finnish, which would

¹⁰ Since the original comments were in Finnish, these are my own translations.

seem to suggest that the Finnish localisation has fulfilled our requirements for good quality.

However, not everyone liked the Finnish version, as a third of the test audience (33%) chose English instead. Curiously, girls preferred English more than the boys, but the reason why is quite unclear. It is doubtful that understanding the English better played a part, as the girls did not fare in the questionnaire considerably better than the boys. It is difficult to speculate, but perhaps the game's sci-fi genre appealed more to the boys in general, so clear understanding could have been more important to them.

Moreover, some of the English choices seem to have unfortunately been influenced by the lower quality of the Finnish footage, as some of the students mentioned it in their comments:

'In English because I can make the speech/game out better.'

'In English because it's much clearer in English.'

It would have been interesting to know how the results of the question (and the whole study) would have changed if the quality of the Finnish videos had been better. Still, its effect on the results has to be accepted as a part of a reception study's challenges. Nevertheless, not all students had made their choice based on the video quality alone, although the reasons varied a lot more than of those who chose Finnish. There was no common nominator for why they preferred English, but the students reported a number of different reasons, some of which have been mentioned before:

'In English because the Finnish voices were really annoying.'

'In English because it's clearer and more authentic.'

'In English because it's better.'

So, it would seem that most of those who chose English did so because they disliked some aspect of the Finnish dub, or because the original version felt more natural for them. Therefore, the Finnish localisation does not seem to have appealed to the whole test audience, and some parts, such as voice acting or clearer instructions, could be improved. Although, it has to be noted that a 100% approval rating is quite

impossible to achieve for any product, so this amount of criticism seems natural. However, criticism was not the only reason for choosing English, as one of the students mentioned their wish to learn by playing:

'In English, because you can learn, it's a shame the subtitles change too fast though.'

Therefore, it seems that for some of the children the decision had nothing to do with the localisation's quality, but the different language was seen as a benefit. Moreover, the student in question noted that the original version could need some improvement instead, as in slower subtitles for language learners.

There was also one last student who chose a third option, and answered:

'Doesn't matter, both are good.'

It is a very positive response that shows that some of the students really did not think the game versions were that different. It also reflects the good possibilities of localisation: the localised version is not merely an inferior version of the original, but a completely new one in its own right. The original has its merits as well and provides an opportunity to learn, so choosing both versions is a valid option. If the game is good and entertaining, it can be played several times, and different language versions can provide new, slightly different experiences. Moreover, as in this case the localisation does not seem to differ very much from the source version, those who choose just one do not miss a lot. So, since the majority of the students chose the Finnish version, but some heavily disliked it, having both versions available would seem to provide all of the target audience with the best experience.

4.2.4 Summary of the results of the Finnish section

The results showed that the reception of the Finnish dub version was mostly good. The different aspects the test audience rated, such as the voice acting and humour, were at least average, although the translation of the jokes was clearly thought to be the weakest aspect of the dub. Lip sync or spoken language did not bother the students, but then again, they also did not notice the process-induced inconsistencies

in the characters' speech. Overall, the students thought the plot and the in-game instructions were clear, but could be improved somewhat.

Even though some of the students found certain parts of the Finnish dub (like the voice acting) irritating, poorer, or less clear than others, for most of the test audience the quality ranged from average to good. Even the final average rating for the Finnish version in general was 3.9, which would make the grading approximately *good*. A particularly interesting fact is that the girls of the group were more critical of the dub than the boys. At the risk of stereotyping, this could have been due to the game's sci-fi/action-adventure genre not interesting the girls in general, and thus affecting their opinion.

However, the majority of the test audience did not think the language versions were too different. Even most of those who thought they had a difference (and were not swayed by the video quality) said it was that the Finnish version was easier to understand. Therefore, the difference was favourable, and did not hinder the experience. Still, the students were more divided on whether or not the versions had a similar feeling to them. Compared to the answers of the previous question, a larger amount of students said the versions did not feel alike, so for some of the students the versions felt different despite their technical similarity. It is difficult to say why this was, or if the change was positive or negative without further study. Nevertheless, the results would seem to prove a clear link between language and experience.

All in all, in the test audience's opinion the Finnish dub and other parts of the localisation that were evaluated in this questionnaire were not perfect, but good enough for the majority. Therefore, the second part of my hypothesis of the children being critical was proven mostly wrong, as most of the students indeed preferred the Finnish version when given the choice due to understanding the game and its plot better. Even though there were some students who preferred the English version for its authenticity or simply disliked the flaws of the localisation (among other reasons), in the end it was understandability that made the Finnish version triumph over the original English one.

So according to the final results, the Finnish dub could be improved, but it seemed to serve its purpose well enough, and the localisation fulfilled the requirements for a good playing experience: entertainment and clarity for the user. However, the test results were affected by some of the students thinking the video material's lower quality was part of the Finnish version, so their accuracy is not absolute. Furthermore, the test audience of the study was extremely limited, so the results cannot be extended to apply to the whole target audience in Finland. Still, the study does give at least a little insight on the quality of *A Crack in Time*'s dub and the attitudes of Finnish children, and hopefully it will pave way for more research about dubbed games in Finland.

5 Conclusion

In this reception study, I attempted to find out what the intended target audience, children, thought of the Finnish dub of the game *Ratchet and Clank: A Crack in Time*, and whether or not they were able to understand the game's story in the English version. I started by introducing game localisation and what kind of processes it contains. Then, I discussed the dubbing process, and the difficult definition and measuring of quality in the field of Translation Studies, which was followed by discussion of reception studies, their special traits, and difficulties. Finally, I described the study's source material, test audience, and method before the analysing the results of the study.

My initial hypothesis was that the children would not be able to understand the English version very well, and that they would be critical of the Finnish localisation. Indeed, the reception study revealed that the children did not understand very much of the characters' speech and the story in English, like I hypothesised. So, it would seem that translating video games is required for at least younger children without proper skills in English to enjoy the stories imbedded in the games. This is especially true if the characters use particularly difficult vocabulary. However, if there is visual information supporting the language, the children can also interpret the situations better and understand more.

However, the study still proved the last part of my hypothesis wrong, as the majority of the children indeed preferred the Finnish version because it was easier for them to understand. Also, most of the students did not see much of a difference between the language versions, although for some the versions felt different. Why exactly this was would require a study of its own. However, when given the choice some of the children – especially the girls – would rather have played the game in English for a variety of reasons, such as the original language feeling more authentic or natural for them, or wanting to learn English through playing. The Finnish dub of the game was also criticised for its voice acting, humour, and unclear instructions, but most of the

criticism was directed at the lower quality of the videos used in the study, which cannot be attributed to the localisation itself.

Despite that, the majority of the children still thought the game's dub was good and clear, and hence it was at least partially successful and sufficient in quality for the test audience to enjoy. Therefore, the aim of the localisation – providing the audience with a similar experience as the source audience – seems to be fulfilled at least for the voiceover sections, which would also fill this study's requirements for good translation quality. Still, having both language versions available could be a good choice, since some of the children preferred the original. That way, those who would rather play in English or wanted to improve their language skills by playing could do so if they wished, which would provide them the best game experience as well.

Still, this study did not completely consider video games' interactive nature while evaluating the localisation's quality, and it concentrated mainly on only the dubbed elements of the game. The reception of the interactive parts of localised games is yet to be studied properly, so perhaps a reception study with the children playing the game themselves could yield different results. The study also covered just a small portion of a game that contains many hours worth of content, so further studies are clearly needed.

Moreover, the test audience of this study was extremely limited, so the results apply only to a small group among the target audience of the game. Furthermore, the test audience consisted of children around the age of 12 who already had decent level of skills in English after studying it for a couple of years. Since dubbing is mainly targeted towards children who do not possess those skills, it would be interesting to see what other age groups within the game's target age, from 7 to even 15 year-olds, would think of the game's localisation. Younger children without any knowledge of English or teenagers with more expansive language skills would most probably yield different results. It would also be interesting to evaluate the parents' – or other adults' – opinions on the localisations of the games their children play.

The reception study itself also revealed a lot of interesting research opportunities, such as how much the mother tongue affects the playing experience compared to a

foreign language, or whether or not players can gradually get used to the localised material and receive it better as time passes. To conclude, there is clearly more room for further studies on the subject of dubbed video games, and hopefully the newer generations of researchers will fill this void in time.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 – The translated English questionnaire

Laura Laine

University of Helsinki

Questionnaire about the Finnish version of the game *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time*

Circle the answer you think is right. The questionnaire is completely anonymous and will not be graded in any way.

Absolutely important: Know, don't guess! If you don't know the right answer, choose the last option **I don't know**. It won't be penalised. :)

Are you a girl ☐ boy ☐ Latest English grade (optional) _____

Have you played the game before? Yes ☐ No ☐

English section 1

1. Who built the Great Clock?
 - a. Nefarious b. The Zoni
 - c. It's unknown d. I don't know
2. Is the Great Clock exactly in the center of the universe?
 - a. Yes b. No
 - c. I don't know
3. What does Nefarious want according to Clank?
 - a. Destruction b. Power
 - c. Revenge d. I don't know
4. What does Lawrence want to do to the? mnemonic station?
 - a. Repair it b. Prepare it
 - c. Get it d. I don't know

Section 2

1. What are Ratchet and Qwark doing?
 - a. Scouting the area
 - b. Rescuing Clank
 - c. They are on hero duty
 - d. I don't know
2. How does Ratchet make Qwark stop annoying him?
 - a. By threatening
 - b. By pleading

- c. By demanding
- d. I don't know

3. According to himself, Qwark is:

- a. Excited b. Impatient
- c. Nervous d. I don't know

4. Why is the area dangerous?

- a. It's uncharted
- b. There are hostile creatures
- c. There are mercenaries
- d. I don't know

5. What is the computer warning them about?

- a. An approaching weather phenomenon
- b. An enemy attack
- c. Something unidentified
- d. I don't know

Section 3

1. What is threatening Qwark (according to him)?

- a. Wild animals b. Nature
- c. Monsters d. I don't know

2. The square button is for

- a. Using the wrench
- b. Using a weapon
- c. Throwing the wrench
- d. I don't know

3. What does Qwark NOT do during the trip?

- a. Give instructions
- b. Complain
- c. Record his hero log
- d. I don't know

4. What is Ratchet's plan?

- a. To look for locals and repair the ship
- b. To look for locals and get a ship
- c. To find a way out of the jungle
- d. I don't know

5. What is causing the phenomenon in the jungle?

- a. They don't know
- b. The planet's natural phenomenon
- c. An error in time
- d. I don't know

Finnish section 1

Circle the option that suits your opinion best. Answer the open questions briefly (with a couple of words or one sentence at maximum).

Number scale: 1 poor - 2 tolerable - 3 average - 4 good - 5 excellent

1. How good was the voice acting? 1 2 3 4 5

2. How well did the Finnish voices fit the characters compared to the English ones? 1 2 3 4 5

3. Did the differences in speech and lip sync bother you? Yes No

4. Was the plot easy to follow? Yes No

4b. If not, why so?

5. How would you rate the humour in the Finnish version? (How funny were the jokes?) 1 2 3 4 5

6. Did Ratchet's colloquial language bother you? Yes No

7. How would you rate the Finnish version as a whole? 1 2 3 4 5

Section 2

1. How good was the voice acting? 1 2 3 4 5

2. How would you rate the humour? 1 2 3 4 5

3. Did something in the characters' speech bother you at any time? Yes No

3b. If so, what?

4. Were the instructions included in the characters' speech (where to go/what to do) clear? Yes No

5. Were the instructions shown on screen clear? Yes No

Final questions:

Do you think there was some kind of big difference between the English and Finnish versions? Yes No

If so, what?

Did the English and Finnish versions feel the same to you? Yes No

Would you rather play the game in English or in Finnish? Why so?

Thank you for answering! :)

Appendix 2 – The original Finnish questionnaire

Laura Laine

Helsingin yliopisto

Kyselytutkimus *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time* -pelin suomenkielisestä versiosta

Ympyröi mielestäsi oikea vaihtoehto. Vastaukset ovat täysin nimettömiä, eikä niitä arvostella millään tavalla.

Ehdottoman tärkeää: Tiedä, älä arvaa! Jos et tiedä oikeaa vastausta, valitse viimeinen vaihtoehto **En tiedä**. Siitä ei sakoteta. :)

Oletko tyttö ☐ poika ☐ Viimeisin englannin arvosanasi
(vapaaehtoinen) _____

Oletko pelannut peliä aikaisemmin? Kyllä ☐ En ☐

Englanninkielinen osio 1

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Kuka rakensi Suuren Kellon? | a. Nefarious b. Zonit
c. Sitä ei tiedetä
d. En tiedä |
| 2. Onko Suuri Kello täsmälleen universumin keskipisteessä? | a. Kyllä b. Ei
c. En tiedä |
| 3. Mitä tohtori Nefarious Clankin mukaan haluaa? | a. Tuhoa b. Valtaa
c. Kosta d. En tiedä |
| 4. Mitä Lawrence haluaa tehdä muistiasemalle? | a. Korjata b. Valmistella
c. Hakea d. En tiedä |

Osio 2

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Mitä Ratchet ja Qwark ovat tekemässä? | a. Tutkimassa aluetta
b. Pelastamassa Clankia
c. He ovat sankarihommissa
d. En tiedä |
| 2. Miten Ratchet saa Qwarkin lopettamaan ärsyttämisen? | a. Uhkailemalla b. Pyytämällä
c. Vaatimalla d. En tiedä |

3. Qwark on omien sanojensa mukaan:

- a. Innoissaan b. Kärsimätön
- c. Hermostunut d. En tiedä

4. Miksi alue on luultavasti vaarallinen?

- a. Se on tuntematon
- b. Siellä on vihamielisiä olioita
- c. Siellä on palkkasotilaita
- d. En tiedä

5. Mistä tietokone varoittaa?

- a. Lähestyvistä sääilmiöistä
- b. Vihollisen hyökkäyksestä
- c. Jostain tunnistamattomasta
- d. En tiedä

Osio 3

1. Mikä Qwarkia uhkaa (hänen mukaansa)?

- a. Villieläimet b. Luonto
- c. Hirviöt d. En tiedä

2. Neliönapilla voi

- a. Käyttää jakoavainta
- b. Käyttää asetta
- c. Heittää jakoavainta
- d. En tiedä

3. Mitä Qwark **ei** tee matkan aikana?

- a. Anna ohjeita
- b. Valita
- c. Selosta supersankarilokiaan
- d. En tiedä

4. Mikä Ratchetin suunnitelma on?

- a. Etsiä paikallisia ja korjata alus
- b. Etsiä paikallisia ja hankkia alus
- c. Löytää tie ulos viidakosta
- d. En tiedä

5. Mikä on viidakossa olevan ilmiön syy?

- a. He eivät tiedä
- b. Planeetan outo luonnonilmiö
- c. Virhe ajassa
- d. En tiedä

Suomenkielinen osio 1

Ympyröi mieleisesi vastausvaihtoehto. Vastaa avoimiin kysymyksiin lyhyesti (parilla sanalla tai korkeintaan yhdellä virkkeellä).

Numeroasteikko: 1 heikko - 2 välttävä - 3 keskitaso - 4 hyvä - 5 erinomainen

1. Kuinka hyvää ääninäyttely mielestäsi oli? 1 2 3 4 5

2. Kuinka hyvin suomenkieliset äänet sopivat hahmoille englanninkielisiin ääniin verrattuina? 1 2 3 4 5

3. Häiritsivätkö hahmojen suunliikkeiden ja varsinaisen puheen erot? Kyllä Ei

4. Oliko juonta helppo seurata? Kyllä Ei

4b. Jos ei, niin miksi?

5. Miten arvioisit suomenkielisen version huumorin? 1 2 3 4 5
(Kuinka hauskoja vitsit/sutkautukset olivat?)

6. Häiritsikö Ratchetin käyttämä puhekieli (mä, sä...)? Kyllä Ei

7. Minkä arvosanan antaisit suomenkieliselle versiolle kokonaisuutena? 1 2 3 4 5

Osio 2

1. Kuinka hyvää ääninäyttely mielestäsi oli? 1 2 3 4 5

2. Miten arvioisit huumorin? 1 2 3 4 5

3. Häiritsikö jokin hahmojen puheessa missään vaiheessa? Kyllä Ei

3b. Jos kyllä, niin mikä?

4. Olivatko hahmojen keskusteluun upotetut ohjeet (minne mennä/miten edetä...) mielestäsi selkeät? Kyllä Ei

5. Olivatko ruudulla näkyvät tekstiohjeet mielestäsi selkeät?	Kyllä	Ei
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Lopuksi:

Oliko suomenkielisessä ja englanninkielisessä versiossa mielestäsi jotain suurta eroa?	Kyllä	Ei
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Jos kyllä, niin mitä?

Tuntuivatko suomenkielinen ja englanninkielinen versio sinusta samalta?	Kyllä	Ei
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Pelaisitko peliä mieluummin suomeksi vai englanniksi? Perustele valintasi.

Kiitos vastauksista! :)

LYHENNELMÄ

Helsingin yliopisto

Nykykielten laitos

Englannin kääntäminen

Laura Laine: Ymmärrys vs. aitous - Vastaanottotutkimus *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time* -pelin suomenkielisestä dubbauksesta

Pro gradu -tutkielma, sivumäärä (60 s, 8 liitesivua, suomenkielinen lyhennelmä 10 s)

Huhtikuu 2016

1 Johdanto

Videopelien kulutus on kasvanut, ja peleistä suosituimmat yhä useammin lokalisoidaan eli käännetään ja muokataan kohdekulttuuriin sopiviksi. Pelilokalisoinnin lisääntyminen on alkanut näkyä myös käännöstieteessä, ja viime vuosina pelilokalisoinnista onkin kirjoitettu enemmän pro gradu -töitä (esim. Karhila 2009, Taarluoto 2011 ja Pitkänen 2014) ja aihetta käsitteleviä teoksia (kuten O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013 ja Bernal-Merino 2015). Kuitenkin monet tutkimukset varsinkin Suomessa ovat käsitelleet lähinnä tekstitettyjä pelejä, ja dubatut pelit prosesseineen ovat jääneet vähemmälle huomiolle. Dubattujen pelien tutkimus on silti tarpeen, sillä Suomessa dubatut mediatuotteet on usein suunnattu lapsille, jotka vielä opettelevat kieltä ja saavat siihen vaikutteita kuluttamastaan mediasta (Tiihonen 2007: 182). Dubattujen pelien kielen laatua on siis syytä tutkia.

Käännöslaadun käsite on kuitenkin häilyvä ja vaikeasti määriteltävissä (Abdallah 2005: 45), joten myös pelilokalisoinnin onnistumista on hankala arvioida. Lokalisoitujen pelien perustarkoituksena on silti tuottaa kohdekielisille pelaajille samanlaisia elämyksiä kuin lähdekielisillekin ja herättää heissä myös samanlaisia tunteita (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 17). Siispä käännettyjen pelien tarkoituksen toteutumista voidaan osittain selvittää kysymällä kuluttajilta eli pelaajilta itseltään, mitä mieltä he ovat lokalisoituista versioista ja vastaavatko pelikokemukset toisiaan.

Kuluttajien mielipiteet selventäisivät myös tarvetta pelien lokalisoinneille. Erityisesti dubattujen pelien kokonaistarve pitäisikin selvittää, sillä dubbaamisen kustannukset ovat suuret (Heikkinen 2007: 236). Lisäksi vieraskielisten pelien pelaamisella on myös todistettu olevan yhteys kielitaidon kehittymiseen (Uuskoski 2011: 57). Jos

lapset siis suhtautuvat negatiivisesti lokalisoituihin peleihin, ymmärtävät lähtökielistä peliä ainakin lähes yhtä hyvin kuin kohdekielistäkin ja kehittävät pelaamalla kielitaitoaan, voidaan miettiä, kannattaako kaikkia pelejä dubata laisinkaan.

Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena onkin vastaanottotutkimuksen avulla selvittää, mitä mieltä dubattujen pelien suurin kohderyhmä eli lapset ovat vuonna 2009 julkaistun *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time* -pelin suomenkielisestä dubbauksesta. Tutkimuksessa kysytään kuudenluokkalaisten lasten mielipiteitä pelin dubbauksen sisältämistä elementeistä, kuten vitseistä ja ääninäyttelystä, sekä kokonaislaadusta. Samalla selvitetään myös lokalisoinnin tarvetta, eli kuinka paljon lapset ymmärtävät pelin juonesta ja tapahtumista alkuperäisestä englanninkielisestä versiosta. Oletuksena on, etteivät lapset juurikaan ymmärrä pelin englantia sen vaativan ja scifi aiheisen sanaston vuoksi. Lasten myös oletetaan olevan kriittisiä suomenkielistä lokalisointia kohtaan Suomessa vallitsevien negatiivisten asenteiden vuoksi (Karvonen 2015).

Esittelen ensin tutkielman taustana käytettyä teoriaa luvussa 2, minkä jälkeen kerron vastaanottotutkimuksessa käytetystä materiaalista sekä tutkimuksen kulusta luvussa 3. Lopuksi kerron tutkimuksen tuloksista tehdyistä havainnoista luvussa 4, ja kokoon johtopäätökset luvussa 5.

2 Teoriatausta

Aluksi kerron pelilokalisoinnista ja siihen kuuluvasta prosessista luvussa 2.1, minkä jälkeen käsittelen dubbausta luvussa 2.2. Luvussa 2.3 kerron käännöslaadun käsitteestä, ja lopuksi vastaanottotutkimuksen haasteista luvussa 2.4.

2.1 Pelilokalisointi

Termi *lokalisointi* on varsin ongelmallinen, sillä lokalisointiteollisuus ja käännöstiede ymmärtävät sen eri tavalla ja kummallakin on sille omat määritelmänsä (Pitkänen 2014: 5; Taarluoto 2011: 17). Yleisesti ottaen lokalisoinnilla kuitenkin tarkoitetaan tuotteiden, eli tässä tapauksessa siis pelien, mukauttamista kohdekieleen ja -kulttuuriin (Karvonen 2015). Pelilokalisointi eroaa muusta kääntämisestä siten,

että prosessissa on monta vaihetta, pitkä eri toimijoiden ketju, ja lopputuote on lisäksi interaktiivinen (Karvonen 2015; O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 75-76).

Pelilokalisointi eroaa myös hyötyohjelmien lokalisoinnista, sillä niiden kääntämisessä tarvitaan enemmän luovuutta ja pääpaino on elämyksen välittämisessä pelaajalle (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 17; Taarluoto 2011: 20). Kuitenkin pelikäntäjät joutuvat työskentelemään vaikeissa olosuhteissa pelialan ongelmien, kuten esimerkiksi piratismiin ja tiukkojen aikataulujen, vuoksi, eivätkä he yleensä edes pääse pelaamaan peliä käännösprosessin aikana. Käännettävät tekstit ovat yleensä irrallisia virkkeitä tai sanoja, jotka saattavat myös sisältää koodielementtejä. (Karvonen 2015.) Kääntäjät joutuvat siis käytännössä kääntämään pelit ilman kontekstia, mikä taas vaikuttaa käännösten laatuun ja lopulta kuluttajien asenteisiin (Pitkänen 2014: 5).

Peleissä on myös paljon käännettävää, kuten pelinsisäiset tekstit, välianimaatiot ja painettu materiaali, kuten ohjekirjat (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 111). Pelit voidaan lokalisoida kokonaan kääntämällä kaikki materiaali, tai lokalisointi voi olla osittaista, kuten pelkkä pelin tekstittäminen. Tutkimuksessa käytetty peli *A Crack in Time* on dubattu, eli se on täysin lokalisoitu. Vaikka pelien lokalisointi eroaa muusta AV-kääntämisestä, niiden dubbausprosessi on silti samanlainen kuin vaikkapa animaatioelokuvienkin. (Karvonen 2015.)

2.2 Dubbaus

Dubbaaminen eli jälkiäänitys tarkoittaa alkuperäisen ääniraidan korvaamista kohdekielisellä. Suomessa dubbauskäännökset on suunnattu pääasiassa alle 11-vuotiaille lapsille, joten dubbaamalla käännetään usein vain lastenohjelmia ja -elokuvia. (Heikkinen 2007: 235, 241.) Sen vuoksi myös dubatut pelit ovat useimmiten lapsille suunnattuja.

Dubbauskääntäjän tavoitteena on tuottaa luonnollista, helposti lausuttavaa puhetta, joka välittää lähtökielisen viestin kohdekielellä ja sopii puhujan suunliikkeisiin (Tiihonen 2007: 175). Suunliikkeiden ja puheen vastaavuuden eli huulisynkronian saavuttaminen on vaikeaa, jos lähtö- ja kohdekielet ovat rakenteeltaan kovin erilaisia, kuten suomi ja englanti. Kuitenkin se on helpompaa animoiduissa tuotteissa, joissa

suunliikkeet eivät ole kovin tarkkoja. (Heikkinen 2007: 239-240.) *A Crack in Timen* välianimaatiot on tehty hyvin tarkasti, joten hyvän huulisynkronian tärkeys korostuu.

Huulisynkronian lisäksi hahmojen puheen täytyy sopia yhteen puhujan olemuksen, ilmeiden ja eleiden kanssa (Heikkinen 2007: 238). Hahmojen kehonkielikin on animoiduissa teoksissa huumorin ja informaation lähde, joten puheen täytyy olla sen mukaista ja sopia asiayhteyteen (Tiihonen 2007: 176). Videopeleissä myös ääninäyttelyn laadulla on suuri merkitys pelikokemukseen ja siten koko käännöksen laatuun ja vastaanottoon (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 167).

2.3 Laatu

Laadun käsite käännöstieteessä on hankalasti määriteltävä ja sen sisältöön vaikuttavat suurilta osin kääntäjän henkilökohtaiset kriteerit, minkä vuoksi kääntäjät eivät olekaan päässeet määritelmästä yksimielisyyteen. Nykyään laadun määrittelemisen ongelmana ovat käännösprosessin lukuisat eri toimijat, kuten käännöstoimistot, joilla kaikilla on omat erilaiset määritelmänsä. Esimerkiksi käännöksen "hyvyyden" lisäksi laatu saattaa sisältää muutakin, kuten alhaisen hinnan. (Abdallah 2005: 45-46; 2007: 279.) Tämä pitää erityisesti paikkansa pelilokalisointialalla, jossa toimijoiden ketju on hyvin pitkä.

Erimielisyydet laadun käsitteestä ja erilaiset odotukset taas heikentävät kääntäjän asemaa aiheuttamalla ristiriitoja (Abdallah 2007: 273). Esimerkiksi pelin kehittäjille ja julkaisijalle myynti on tärkeä seikka käännöksen laadun määrittelemisessä, mutta kääntäjä taas saattaa määritellä sen oman henkilökohtaisen käännösstrategiansa mukaan. Tämän vuoksi kääntäjien yhteinen määritelmä laadulle selventäisi toimijoiden velvollisuuksia, ja käännöslaadulle voitaisiin luoda koko tuotantoketjun kattavat selkeät standardit, mikä varsinkin pelilokalisointialalla voisi parantaa lopputuotteiden laatua. (Abdallah 2005: 46.)

Laatu on silti edelleen häilyvä konsepti, koska edes kunnollinen määritelmä ei täysin takaa sitä kontekstiriippuvaisuuden vuoksi (Abdallah 2007: 283). Lisäksi käännöksen laatua on vaikea arvostella, sillä kääntäjä ei ole yksin vastuussa lopputuotteesta, vaan jokainen toimija on saattanut sitä muokata. Kuitenkin yksi tapa mitata käännöslaatua on yleisön mielipide käännetystä tuotteesta sen kontekstissa. (Gummerus & Paro

2001: 138, 142, 189). Koska pelien on tarkoitus viihdyttää ja tuottaa elämyksiä, tässä tutkimuksessa käytetään käännöslaadun mittarina lokalisoidun pelin kuluttajalle antamaa kokemusta.

2.4 Vastaanottotutkimukset

Käännöstieteessä vastaanottotutkimukset ovat lyhyesti määriteltyinä tutkimuksia, joissa selvitetään yleisön mielipidettä käännetystä materiaalista. AV-käännöksiä käsittelevät vastaanottotutkimukset ovat olleet aiemmin harvinaisia ja keskittyneet tavanomaisiin AV-kääntämisen lajeihin, ja ne on tehty lähes yksinomaan teoreettisesta näkökulmasta (Tuominen 2007: 295-296). Videopelikäännösten vastaanottotutkimusten tulisi kuitenkin olla empiirisiä, sillä pelaajien tunteet ovat lokalisoitujen pelien laadun tärkeä mittari pelien kokemuseräisyyden vuoksi. Koska videopelien perimmäinen tarkoitus on viihdyttää, lokalisointien vastaanottotutkimuksille onkin vahvat perusteet. (O'Hagan & Mangiron 2013: 312.)

Vastaanottotutkimuksissa on omat ongelmakohtansa, joita tuottavat esimerkiksi audiovisuaalisten tuotteiden multimodaalisuus, keskimääräisen yleisön määrittelemisen vaikeus, sekä vastaajien yksilöllisyys ja erilaiset vastaustavat (Tuominen 2007: 297, 299). Lisäksi tämän tutkimuksen tapauksessa lasten kanssa työskentelyssä on myös omat haasteensa, kuten esimerkiksi lasten rajallinen keskittymiskyky. Vastaanottotutkimukset ovat kuitenkin tärkeitä, sillä ne kertovat jotain kohdeyleisön asenteesta ja käännettyjen tekstien käytöstä (Tuominen 2007: 297). Vaikka kääntäjällä olisikin käänносprosessin aikana jonkinlainen mielikuva mahdollisesta lukijasta, todellinen lukija poikkeaa siitä väistämättä (Tuominen 2013: 46, 48). Niinpä vastaanottotutkimuksista on hyötyä myös kääntäjille, jotka saavat tietää, millaisia tuotteen kohdeyleisö ja heidän odotuksensa todella ovat (Tuominen 2007: 297).

3 Materiaali ja metodi

Vastaanottotutkimuksen lähdemateriaalina oli vuonna 2009 PlayStation 3 -konsolille ilmestynyt humoristinen lasten ja nuorten scifitoimintapeli *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time*. Pelin laajan sisällön vuoksi siitä valittiin koeyleisölle näytettäväksi

kaksi elokuvamaista välianimaatiota pelin alusta sekä noin viisi minuuttia kuvamateriaalia varsinaisesta peliosuudesta. Kaikista videoista oli sekä suomen- että englanninkieliset versiot, joten yhteensä videoita oli kuusi. Näytettävät videot olivat melkein samanlaiset molemmilla kielillä, mutta englanninkielisissä videoissa oli mukana myös englanninkieliset tekstitykset. Suomenkielisten videoiden laatu oli lisäksi hieman huonompi niiden nauhoittamiseen käytetyn kaappauskortin iän vuoksi.

Videoiden lisäksi tutkimuksessa käytettiin suomenkielistä kyselylomaketta, jossa aluksi kysyttiin vastaajien sukupuolta, viimeisintä englannin arvosanaa ja sitä, oliko vastaaja pelannut kyseistä peliä aiemmin. Varsinaisessa kyselyssä oli kaksi osiota. Englanninkielinen osio sisälsi 14 monivalintakysymystä, joilla mitattiin lasten ymmärrystä pelin tapahtumista. Kysymykset oli jaoteltu alaosioiden videoiden mukaan. Yhtä lukuun ottamatta jokaisessa kysymyksessä oli neljä vastausvaihtoehtoa, joista viimeinen oli aina *En tiedä*. Vastaajia kehoitettiin valitsemaan kyseinen vaihtoehto, jos he eivät tieneet vastausta kysymykseen. Näin pyrittiin välttämään sokeaa arvailua, vaikka menetelmä ei tietenkään ollut aukoton ja arvaaminen oli täysin mahdollista.

Suomenkielisessä osiossa oli puolestaan 15 kysymystä suomeksi dubatun version laadusta. Kahden ensimmäisen alaosion kysymykset koskivat välianimaatioiden ääninäyttelyn ja huumorin laatua sekä mahdollisia häiritseviä tekijöitä, kuten huulisynkroniaa. Kysely sisälsi yksinkertaisia kyllä–ei-kysymyksiä mahdollisin tarkentavin avoimin B-kohdin sekä arviointikysymyksiä, joissa vastaajia pyydettiin arvostelemaan tietty elementti asteikolla yhdestä viiteen: 1 heikko - 2 välttävä - 3 keskitaso - 4 hyvä - 5 erinomainen.

Koeyleisönä vastaanottotutkimuksessa toimi Tuusulan Kellokosken koulun luokka 6B, jossa oli 19 oppilasta. Heistä kahdeksan oli poikia ja 11 tyttöjä. Lisäksi seitsemän oppilasta oli pelannut peliä aikaisemmin. Vastaanottotutkimus pidettiin Kellokosken koululla 21.10.2015 6B-luokan englannintunnilla, ja se kesti noin 45 minuuttia. Tutkimus aloitettiin jakamalla oppilaille ensin vain kyselylomakkeen englanninkielinen osio ja näyttämällä heille englanninkieliset videot yksi kerrallaan. Kunkin videon jälkeen oppilaat vastasivat videota käsitteleviin monivalintakysymyksiin.

Kun englanninkieliseen osioon oli vastattu, jaettiin lomakkeen suomenkielinen osio. Sitten oppilaat katsoivat videoiden suomenkieliset versiot ja vastasivat mielipidekyselyyn. Ensin he katsoivat molemmat välianimaatiot ja vastasivat alaosioon yksi, ja sen jälkeen he katsoivat pelitallenteen ja vastasivat alaosioon kaksi. Aivan lopuksi oppilaat vastasivat lomakkeen toisella puolella oleviin loppukysymyksiin. Tutkimuksen päätyttyä vastauslomakkeet kerättiin sisäkkäin taiteltuina, jotta vastaajien lomakkeet eivät olisi sekoittuneet keskenään.

4 Analyysi

Tässä luvussa esitellään vastaanottotutkimuksen tulokset; ensin englanninkielisestä osiosta ja sen jälkeen suomenkielisestä. Lopullisista tuloksista on jätetty pois yksi oppilas, joka ei vastannut kysymyksiin.

4.1 Englanninkielinen osio

Englanninkielisessä osiossa mitattiin oppilaiden ymmärrystä pelin juonesta ja hahmojen puheesta englanninkielisessä versiossa. Videoiden mukaan kolmeen alaosioon jaetut 14 monivalintakysymystä olivat osittain tahallisen vaikeita, ja oikea vastaus perustui usein hahmojen puheeseen, jolloin sitä ei voitu päätellä pelkän kontekstin perusteella. Kysymyksiin oli mahdollista vastata myös *En tiedä*, jos kysymys oli liian vaikea.

Kyselyn tulosten perusteella koeyleisö ei juurikaan ymmärtänyt pelin englantia. Oikeiden vastausten määrä oli vähintään 50 % vain neljässä 14:stä kysymyksestä, joten suurimmaksi osaksi enemmistö oppilaista joko vastasi väärin tai ei tiennyt vastausta. Väärien vastausten määrä oli entistä suurempi, jos oikean vastauksen löytämiseen vaadittiin pelin tyyllilajiin kuuluvaa sanastoa tai vastaus oli ilmoitettu epäsuorasti, esimerkiksi vitsin muodossa. Ensimmäinen osa hypoteesista näyttäisi siis pitävän paikkansa, ja pelikäännös vaikuttaisi olevan tarpeen, jotta pienemmät ja englantia taitamattomat lapset voisivat nauttia pelin tarinasta ja huumorista.

Toisaalta jokaiseen kysymykseen vastasi oikein ainakin yksi oppilas. Lisäksi oikeiden vastausten määrä oli aina suurempi, kun videon sisältämä visuaalinen informaatio tuki puhetta tai selitti tilannetta. Vaikka silkkä arvaaminen oli

mahdollista ja osa oppilaista oli pelannut peliä aikaisemmin, ei tärkeimpien juonielementtien ymmärtäminen ja pelissä edistyminen siis vaikuttaisi olevan lapsille täysin mahdotonta. Mutta koska koeyleisöltä jäi ymmärtämättä paljon puhetta ja vitsejä, pelikokemus ei luultavasti olisi englanniksi samanlainen kuin lähtökielen puhujilla. Vertailun vuoksi suomenkielisestä lokalisoinnista saatua kokemusta kysyttiin suomenkielisessä osiossa.

4.2 Suomenkielinen osio

Suomenkielinen osio sisälsi varsinaisen vastaanottotutkimusosan, jossa oppilaat katsoivat suomenkieliset videot ja arvioivat dubbauksen eri elementtejä. Alaosiossa 1 oli seitsemän välianimaatiovideoita koskevaa kysymystä, ja alaosiossa 2 oppilaat katsoivat suomenkielisen pelivideon ja vastasivat viiteen kysymykseen. Loppuosiossa oli kolme kokoavaa kysymystä kieliversioiden eroista ja paremmuudesta. Huomioitavaa on, että osa oppilaista luuli suomenkielisten videoiden huonon laadun olevan osa pelilokalisointia, mikä vaikutti kyselyn tuloksiin.

Tulosten perusteella suomenkielisen dubbauksen vastaanotto oli laadusta huolimatta pääosin positiivista. Enemmistö koeyleisöstä arvioi ääninäyttelyn ja huumorin keskitasoiseksi tai paremmaksi, eivätkä esimerkiksi huulisynkronia tai päähenkilön käyttämä puhekieli häirinneet oppilaita. Pelilokalisointiprosessin aiheuttamat epäjohdonmukaisuudet hahmojen puheessa jäivät sen sijaan koeyleisöltä huomaamatta.

Pelin sisältämiä ohjeita ja suomenkielisen version esitystä juonesta pidettiin selkeinä, vaikka joidenkin oppilaiden mielestä ohjeistusta olisi voinut hieman parantaa. Lisäksi suomeksi käännetty huumori oli koeyleisön mielestä dubbauksen selkeästi heikoin osa. Koeyleisön kokonaisarvosana suomenkieliselle versiolle oli pienistä puutteista huolimatta 3,9, eli melkein *hyvä*. Suomeksi dubattu versio ei siis ollut täydellinen, mutta tarpeeksi hyvä miellyttämään enemmistöä. Näin ollen hypoteesin toinen osa osoittautui vääräksi, ja lokalisointi vaikuttaisi täyttäneen tehtävänsä koeyleisön viihdyttämisessä.

Tämä näkyi myös loppuosion tuloksissa, jossa enemmistö oppilaista kertoikin pelaavansa peliä mieluummin suomeksi. Suomea puoltavat oppilaat kertoivat syyksi sen, että pelin ja sen juonen ymmärtäminen oli helpompaa. Lisäksi äidinkielellä pelaaminen tuntui osasta luontevammalta. Yksi kolmasosa oppilaista kuitenkin suosi englanninkielistä versiota monista eri syistä. Osa piti sitä yksinkertaisesti parempana ja alkuperäiskieltä aidompana. Muita syitä englannin valitsemiselle olivat myös jokin ärsyttävä ominaisuus suomenkielisessä dubbauksessa, hämääntyminen suomenkielisten videoiden laadusta tai halu oppia englantia pelaamalla. Huomattavaa oli, että tytöt pitivät englanninkielisestä versiosta suhteellisesti enemmän kuin pojat. Lisäksi yksi oppilas ei osannut valita, vaan piti molemmista kieliversioista.

Itse asiassa oppilaat eivät kokonaisuudessaan nähneet suurta eroa englannin- ja suomenkielisen version välillä: 72:n prosentin mielestä ne olivat samanlaisia. Jonkinlaisen eron havainneet oppilaat taas kommentoivat syyksi sen, että suomenkielinen versio oli ymmärrettävämpi, eli ero kieliversioissa oli positiivinen asia. Sen sijaan kun oppilailta kysyttiin, *tuntuivatko* versiot samalta, vastaukset vaihtelivat enemmän. Vaikka enemmistö ei tuntenut eroa, hieman edellistä suurempi joukko oppilaita tunsu. Tulosten perusteella osasta koyleisöä kieliversiot siis tuntuivat erilaisilta, vaikka ne olivat heidän mielestään teknisesti samanlaisia. Pelin kieli voi siis nähtävästi muuttaa kokemusta jonkin verran, mutta on hankala sanoa, kuinka paljon ja miten. Sen selvittäminen vaatisi oman, erillisen tutkimuksensa.

5 Lopputulokset

Tutkimuksessa yritettiin selvittää kuudesluokkalaisten lasten mielipiteitä *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time* -pelin suomenkielisestä dubbauksesta sekä heidän ymmärrystään englanninkielisestä versiosta vastaanottotutkimuksen avulla. Tutkimus osoitti, että lapset ymmärsivät melko vähän pelin englanninkielisen version juonesta ja hahmojen puheesta. Tämä koski niitäkin lapsia, jotka olivat pelanneet peliä aikaisemmin. Videopelien kääntäminen näyttäisi siis olevan tarpeellista, jotta ainakin pienemmät ja englantia vähemmän osaavat lapset voivat nauttia pelin tarinasta ja kokea saman elämyksen kuin lähtökieliset pelaajatkin.

Tutkimuksessa selvisi myös, että suurin osa lapsista piti enemmän suomenkielisestä versiosta, koska he ymmärsivät pelin juonen paremmin. Lasten mielestä suomenkielinen lokalisointi oli myös selkeä, ja muun muassa ääninäyttelyä ja vitsejä pidettiin keskimäärin vähintään keskitasoisina. Näin ollen lokalisointi oli ainakin näiden vastaanottajien kokemuksen osalta onnistunut, ja sen laatu siis sen myötä hyvä. Lisäksi lapset eivät nähneet suomen- ja englanninkielisen version välillä kovin suurta eroa, mutta joidenkin mielestä ne eivät silti tuntuneet samalta. Osa lapsista ilmoittikin valitsevansa mieluummin englanninkielisen version, koska se tuntui heistä aidommalta. Koska osa koyleisöstä piti englanninkielistä versiota parempana ja pelien on todettu kehittävän kielitaitoa, molempien kieliversioiden olisi hyvä olla lasten saatavilla.

Tutkimuksessa ei kuitenkaan otettu täysin huomioon videopelien interaktiivista luonnetta, ja siinä käytettiin vain murto-osaa koko pelin tunteja kestävästä sisällöstä. Jotta lokalisoidun pelin laatua voitaisiin mitata paremmin, olisi koyleisön päästävä pelaamaan ja kokemaan lokalisoitu peliversio itse. Myös koyleisön koko oli hyvin rajattu, joten tuloksia ei voida yleistää koskemaan koko kohdeyleisöä. Eri-ikäiset ja taustaltaan erilaiset koyleisöt antaisivat luultavasti myös erilaisia tuloksia. Lisäksi olisi mielenkiintoista tutkia, mikä saa aikaan eron lokalisoinnin ja alkuperäisversion tunnelmassa. Videopelien laadussa ja vastaanotossa on siis vielä paljon tutkittavaa.